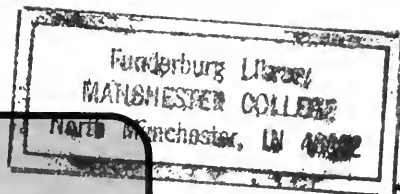


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The Brethren Evangelist

Vol. 122, No. 1

A newsletter for Brethren people

January 2000

A look toward the future The year 2000 and beyond

We have reached a major milestone in history. It is an appropriate time to look at where we are and where we are headed. This is true personally; it is also true of the church. Much of this first *Evangelist* of the year 2000 is devoted to the latter, looking at the present and future of The Brethren Church. The issue begins with a three-part article, "A look toward the future," by three denominational leaders, Dr. Emanuel (Buzz) Sandberg, Dr. Dan Lawson, and Rev. Reilly Smith. This is followed by a section in which various Brethren share their thoughts about The Brethren Church as it enters the new millennium. Also included, to give us some perspective, are a few comments made by Brethren 100 years ago at the beginning of the twentieth century. May these articles serve as resources for your reflections as together we look toward the future of The Brethren Church.

A look toward the future

Introduction

by Emanuel W. Sandberg

THE YEAR 2000 is a milestone which I believe should be significant to every person now alive. The new millennium will be a period of great change in the world—new hopes, new opportunities, and new fears for our church and, indeed, for Christianity as we have known it.

Any look to the future, however, must take into consideration the past. As we look back, the facts—without sugar coating—are these:

- Protestant church membership, and the number of protestant churches, maxed out in the sixties and steadily decreased throughout the last 30 years of the twentieth century.
- During this period of declining church membership, the United States population increased by more than 35 percent, indicating that the membership decline was worse than most people believed.

- This experience reported for "mainline" protestant churches is also true for The Brethren Church.

Consider the following:

1. Since splitting with the Grace Brethren in 1939, there has not been one decade during which denominational membership and the number of Brethren churches actually increased.

2. The number of congregations continues to decline. A total of 22 churches closed from 1987 to 1996. Some of these were new churches, but 16 had been in existence for ten years or more.

3. During many years, a number of our congregations added **no new members** during the year; and in 1997 more than one-third of our



Dr. Sandberg is
Executive Director for
The Brethren Church.

congregations added **no new members** by conversion.

4. Even while membership has declined, the level of financial support from our members has increased. In the short term, more dollars are being given by fewer members. In the long term, however, financial support is likely to decline sharply if present membership trends continue.

There are other potential problems for The Brethren Church—and for Christianity in general—as we enter the third millennium. Look around you. Our membership is getting older. Our congregations do not

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The *Women's Outlook Newsletter* is in the center of this issue.

look like the Y2K communities in which we live. In many cases our church budgets do not enable us to pay our pastors competitive professional salaries, let alone provide the funds needed to employ the support personnel we need in order to carry out our Christian mandates. We have an expensive form of professional theological education, and the seminary graduates will soon be priced out of reach of many Brethren congregations.

We may find some comfort in the fact that The Brethren Church is no worse off (at least relatively) than the Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, and most other denominations. At the congregational level we have tried valiantly to change the direction of church membership statistics, to stimulate evangelistic efforts, and to generate new programs or projects to fix the problems that are causing our church to stagnate and decline.

What concerns me most is that **all** protestant churches are in trouble. Are we playing follow-the-leader to disaster? If we are all in trouble, it seems likely that our problems are related to culture, attitudes, leadership, and environment. Furthermore, most of our creative programs seem to be directed at solving only symptomatic problems. Thus they will help keep us alive, but they won't make us healthy.

I believe that The Brethren Church and **all** Christendom has been sick for more than 100 years, but it is only in recent years that we have witnessed a pattern of congregational decline and death. Now, however, it is happening more and more frequently, to the surprise of many. What should we expect—more congregations to close, denom-

inations to collapse and merge, God to turn His back on "His church?"

I believe we should expect the problems of the past to become more complicated in the decades ahead:

- We are becoming a nation of senior citizens. Many church members over the age of 55 (the majority of members in many of our Brethren congregations) will retire, become less active, and die. Their energy and financial contributions, which have undergirded the church during our lifetime, will be lost.

***"I believe
The Brethren Church
is poised, ready
to seize the
opportunities of this
new century."***

- Unless we **change**, the younger people will stop coming to our traditional churches. Programs of today will be abandoned for lack of interest and support.
- Migration, immigration, and cultural integration will cause ethnic people to turn their backs on the culturally "isolated" churches of North American Christendom, including the churches developed from their own cultural/ethnic heritage.
- It seems likely that federal, state, and local governments will change the laws regarding the taxation of church property and clergy benefits.
- In the face of institutional collapse, fewer Christians will be

called to church leadership, and seminaries will be closed or drastically changed.

- Congregational and denominational funds will dwindle, and Christian support for missions, capital funding, publishing, and resource development will be curtailed accordingly.

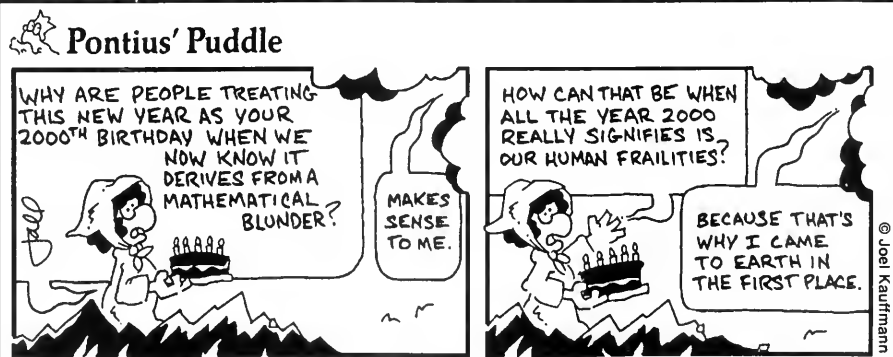
Considering what we have done with God's world and His church in the 2,000 years since Christ's birth, I don't know why God would trust us to solve the problems of His church. But I believe He still does. I know from the history of God's relationship with believers that He is merciful and faithful. God trusts that we can and will change. We have worshiped God with our faith jacketed in a particular view of society and in an institutional system that reflected societies understanding of how things should be done. But that society no longer exists.

I doubt that many are totally surprised by what I have written above. But the situation is much more threatening than we have previously thought. What we have done in the past will not solve our problems. This is "pay-back" time for Brethren who are dedicated to listening to and following God.

God has promised us a bright future, but I believe He is also calling us to reshape our lives and institutions in basic ways:

We must change our system of congregational life and transform our churches, reducing our dependence on heritage and tradition. We cannot be controlled by organizational protocols and demands for uniformity. The changes needed must belong to and be accepted by congregations and church leaders. Once change is accepted, leaders

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will have to develop strategies to achieve the change.

Do we have time? I believe we do, with God's help and direction. But we have to be geared up to make changes much faster than in the past. As writer Tony Compolo has said, Christians need to be ready to "seize the moment" and implement change when the opportunity arises. Transformational changes depend on vision and the opportunistic initiative of leaders.

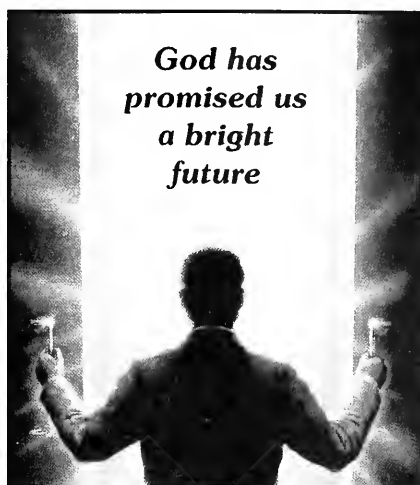
Congregations expect professional leadership from their pastors, but they do not know how to develop and implement strategies to achieve congregational goals. Therefore, the development of lay leadership is a critical factor in implementing systemic change in the church. Congregations may have lost their focus on mission. Leaders must be spiritual guides, facilitating transforming experiences that change the human heart. The experience of Jesus has been complicated by ideological interpretations that limit our relationship with Christ.

The Brethren Church needs to become a First Century Christian Church again, helping all people come to know and experience Jesus. The secret of transforming people is giving them **the opportunity** to experience God. Jesus demonstrated for us His strategic plan of change—recruiting disciples and training them to follow him. When He left the earth, Jesus said, "Follow my example—recruit followers and disciple them, and know that I will be with you always."

I believe The Brethren Church is poised, ready to seize the opportunities of this new century. We will become a First Century (Third Millennium) Church, casting aside the imprisoning chains of organizational lethargy, complacency, and self-doubt. With God's help, we will transform our church on a vision path leading to system changes.

The Brethren Church Vision Path

God has a plan for your life and ministry as well as for The Brethren Church. God has a perspective on our lives and on the life of our church. To understand that perspective, we have to seek God. In our prayers we



need to ask God for direction and then pause to listen for God to give His direction. He will build for us and our church a bridge to the future.

We have accepted God's vision path for The Brethren Church and have adopted it as our guide to the future. It is as follows:

We see The Brethren Church as a body of believers who are renewed, alive and energized, as:

- I. A church which has **rediscovered** its purpose and a membership which is filled with the **Holy Spirit** and **rededicated** to the calling and mission we have had for 2000 years.

(We were called by Jesus in His Great Commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. . . . Love your neighbor as yourself." Matt. 22:37-39, *NIV*). (Our mission, as stated by Jesus in his Great Commission to us: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt. 28:19-20, *NIV*).

- II. A church whose members are filled with the Holy Spirit, growing in their relationship to Jesus Christ, and who have developed a passionate desire to serve God and His Son Jesus Christ.
- III. A church growing in spiritual health, membership and worship attendance.
- IV. A dynamic multinational, multi-ethnic, multiracial church.
- V. A church with an explosion of young people, developing exciting,

challenging new programs to equip Brethren youth for leadership and service in the church and in the world.

- VI. A church developing new, affordable, and regionally available educational support systems for Brethren pastors and lay leaders.
- VII. A church developing new service and leadership opportunities for men and women in the mainstream of Brethren Church ministries.

We have studied what God and His Son, Jesus Christ, are doing in the world, trying to understand the context of our vision for The Brethren Church in our society at this time in history. As Christians we are crossing difficult and critical terrain, but I believe this millennium provides Brethren and The Brethren Church with wonderful opportunities for personal, congregational, and denominational change—opportunities for us to transform our lives and our church.

God has a plan and specific assignments for each one of us. As we move down our Brethren Vision Path over the next decade, I see us:

- Developing and participating in a Global Program of Evangelism.
- Planting at least fifty new Brethren churches, including inner-city and Hispanic churches.
- Joining arms together with our Brethren as active church planting supporters, with **every** Brethren church a sponsor or co-sponsor of a church plant.
- Expanding the geographic spread of Brethren churches.
- Joyfully participating in the Renewal of Pastor and People for every Brethren Church.
- Challenging all Brethren to new levels of performance in accordance with their spiritual gifts and the resources God has provided us.

God's vision for our lives will clarify the purpose and direction of our lives. We are being challenged to grow in our Christian beliefs and to set and accept new standards of ministry and action for ourselves.

We are blessed by God! We have a new chance; we have been given a renewed spirit; we are in a new day. Welcome to the transforming life of the new millennium! [~]

A look toward the future

Congregational Evangelism

By Dan Lawson

AS THE BRETHREN CHURCH moves into a new millennium, it is imperative that we realize our full potential as servants of an all-powerful, all-knowing God. There is literally nothing that is beyond the realm of God's ability. As His people, through the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit, we become the vessels of His Almighty power. With this in mind we can and should move ahead boldly to capture the promises God has given us.

What will the future look like?

As a child, I was fascinated by Flash Gordon, Star Trek, and other futuristic television programs because they offered a glimpse at what the future might look like. Mankind has always been intrigued with the future, often stooping to using crystal balls and 1-900-Psychic hotlines in an effort to somehow get a peek

at what the future has in store. Needless to say, I hold no stock in such approaches. Rather, I believe in a God who knows the future. Who better to put our trust in and who better to turn to when we have questions about the future? The following is what I believe is God's desire for The Brethren Church in the first decade of this new millennium.

Bigger, better, 'bolder'!

I see The Brethren Church in this next decade as a worldwide church with at least 175 thriving congregations in North America and a membership in the United States of at least 25,000 to 30,000 people. We will work hand-in-hand with our Brethren churches around the world as together we answer our Lord's Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). We will no longer view our Brethren churches in other countries as missions but rather as fellow Brethren and co-laborers in a commitment to world evangelism. Our view of missions will be redefined as we plant new churches and support other worldwide efforts.

New service and leadership opportunities

As The Brethren Church in the United States, we plan to be aggressive in planting 50 new churches within the next decade. This many new churches will provide enormous opportunities for Brethren people to get involved in both leadership and ministry. Also, as each church

promotes the concept that "Every Member is a Minister," the resulting growth and renewal of these churches will provide excellent opportunities for members to get involved in exciting new ministries within the local church.



Dr. Lawson is Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church.

In order to accomplish this, we will be taking at least 50 of our existing churches through a "transformational process" aimed at church renewal for ministry in this millennium. One of the goals of this process will be that each of these 50 churches become a "mother church" for one of the 50 new churches that we will be planting.

In order to accomplish this, each of these churches will need to actively recruit and develop leaders who will seek to serve in a new church plant. Each church will also need to develop a comprehensive Mission/Vision/Strategy statement that will lead to its own growth and renewal as well as to a desire to start new churches. Statistics prove that when any church is active in planting a new church, the result is almost always growth for the mother church as well. It is my hope that in addition to the work of these 50 mother churches, that every Brethren congregation will actively seek to be involved in our church planting efforts in some way.

This kind of church growth will not be easy, **but it is possible!** By employing servant leadership, servant evangelism, and dynamic gift-based ministries in all our churches,



we can and will see miraculous results. These results will be in direct proportion to our faith in God, our obedience to Him, and our willingness to follow His leading.

Active senior and youth ministries

In this new decade The Brethren Church will be intentional about caring for and nurturing those within our midst. In the next ten years, as the Baby Boomer generation gets older, we will see increased need for ministry with and to "senior citizens." Our churches must seek creative ways to meet the needs of a rapidly-growing population of older adults, while at the same time making adequate room for the vivid expression and active participation of the younger generation.

These two segments of our society need not be polarized. In order to care for both, we will:

- develop creative ministries that care for and incorporate ministry to shut-ins and the elderly;
- design mentor programs to creatively pass the wisdom of the older generations to members of the younger generations;
- make room for new and different ministry expressions of the young;
- develop ministries that will reach young adults and college-age young people.

Spiritual vitality

In the process of becoming The Brethren Church of the new millennium, we dare not neglect our spiritual heritage. Our methods of ministry may change, but our mission will never change. We will continue to be a church founded on faith and devotion to God and committed to prayer and the study of God's Word as we share the Gospel message in the context of community and

through compassion for others.

As we move into this new millennium, the only two things that we can be sure of are that change is a universal constant and that the Lord is with us. The ministry opportunities in this next century may be very similar to those of the first century church as we encounter a generation of people who have had no previous contact with the church or with the Gospel. We will certainly have ministry opportunities that our parents and grandparents never anticipated.

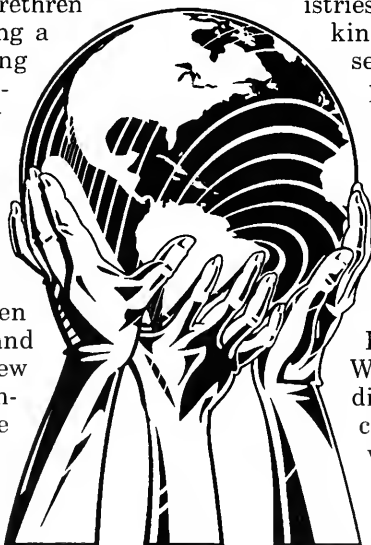
Since we know that the Lord is with us, nothing should keep us from bravely stepping forward to conquer this new Promised Land that God has promised us. *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"* (Jeremiah 29:11, *NIV*). [†]

A look toward the future Worldwide Evangelism

By Reilly R. Smith

DURING THIS FIRST DECADE of the new millennium, The Brethren Church will focus its efforts on kingdom-building ministries in the United States and around the world. I see The Brethren Church again becoming a going and sending church, with each congregation and every person committed to Great Commission ministries.

Together we will plant new congregations, revitalize existing ones, strengthen growing churches, and establish significant new ministries in our communities, across the nation, and around the world. We will forge strategic partnerships between



Brethren churches, ministries, and institutions in order to reach out with the Gospel in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will work with like-minded churches and ministries for the sake of God's kingdom. We will also send forth Brethren people with our blessing and our support when God leads them to serve with other churches and ministries.

In the United States, we will aggressively plant new Brethren churches. We expect Brethren districts and local churches to provide vision, direction, personnel, and support for these church plants. The Mis-

sionary and Congregational Ministries Councils, working together with Ashland Theological Seminary, will provide leadership, resources, and support for

new church-planting and revitalization efforts. We will plant many different kinds of churches using a variety of methods in order to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel. We will plant new churches in communities near to existing Brethren churches, but we will also target areas new to The Brethren



Rev. Smith is Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.

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Church. We will establish beachheads from which we can plant clusters of new churches. We will also intentionally reach out to diverse people groups by planting at least five urban churches and five Hispanic churches. I believe that we will plant at least 50 new Brethren churches by the year 2010, and that we will influence the planting of 20 more churches through strategic partnerships and cooperative efforts with other Believers' and evangelical churches.

International missions

Outside the United States, we will continue to develop our current mission fields by changing our role from leadership to support and encouragement ministries. We must concentrate on developing indigenous leaders. We will help The Brethren Church in Argentina plant new churches at home and develop new mission fields in neighboring countries. We will support and cooperate with South American Theological Seminary to produce leaders for these new ministries.

We will also work to establish a ministry training school in Mexico to provide leadership for church planting and mission development in that country and in Central America. Possibly this will be done in partnership with South American and Ashland Theological Seminaries.

We will expand our mission work in Malaysia by developing new lead-

ers. We will explore opportunities in other Asian countries through already-established relationships with Ashland Theological Seminary and through contacts with Filipino Brethren in Northern California. New missionary ministries in the Pacific Rim will probably arise out of partnerships with other existing churches or missions and the Pacific Rim programs of Ashland Theological Seminary.

We will strive to increase support and encouragement for Brethren Mission in India as it continues to multiply the number of its churches and ministries. We will concentrate on training leaders through the extension and residential Bible institutes; on building an internal funding base for core social ministries; and on raising funds for special projects. We will also continue to support the missionary staff—Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar, Sudhir and Lathe Kumar, and Vincent and Shanti Edwin.

Short-term missions

The Brethren Church will provide expanded opportunities for Brethren to serve on short-term mission teams both inside and outside of the United States. These opportunities will introduce Brethren people to cross-cultural disciple-making at home and abroad and will help develop mission-minded people who will give us new vision. They will challenge young and second-career

Brethren to consider vocational Christian service. Short-term missions will also increase involvement in local ministry and leadership by opening the eyes of participants to new possibilities for Christian service in their own churches and communities.

World Relief

The Brethren Church will pursue deeper ties with World Relief. We will recruit Brethren people to serve on World Relief task forces, committees, and leadership boards. We will deploy Brethren people on short-term development and disaster response teams. We will actively participate in World Relief's United States ministries, especially refugee resettlement. We will lend Brethren people to serve God through World Relief. We will also continue to grow in our giving to support World Relief ministry as local churches in the United States cooperate with local churches around the world.

I see The Brethren Church becoming a growing and powerful tool in the hands of God to build His kingdom on earth. I believe that our desire to serve God and people will bear great fruit in the first decade of this new millennium. I am confident that we possess the desire, gifts, talents, and resources to accomplish great things through the power of God. Finally, I truly believe that we also possess the *will* to obey the vision He has given us. [✠]

A look to the past

What were Brethren at the beginning of the 19th century saying about the future of The Brethren Church? In the January 3, 1901, issue of The Brethren Evangelist, several prominent people in the church shared their thoughts about the future. Following is a sampling of what they said.*

"The new century ought to witness a greater triumph of the principles of Christ, ought to see a more universal acknowledgment of them in the lives of men; ought to see a more general loving one's neighbor as one's self."

— R.R. Teeter, Brethren pastor who became editor of the *Evangelist* in 1915.

*Brethren then were "purists" who believed the new century began in 1901.

— ◇ —
"One hears and reads much about the responsibilities of the coming century, as if they would be greater than they were in the past one, but no one gives a good excuse for that theory. Men always have been, and always will be responsible for the proper use of all their knowledge and possessions; the fact that in a few days from now we will write 1901 instead of 1900 will not change matters one iota."

— J.C. Cassel, Brethren Church leader given the title "the father of Brethren foreign missions."

— ◇ —
"... opportunity and obligation ... in these two words is contained the message of the nineteenth to the twentieth century."

"It is certainly true that before the church of today lies the opportunity of the ages. Doors of opportunity are open and opening on every hand."

"But to the Christian, opportunity means obligation. If God opens to us a door of service we are under obligations to him to enter. . . . The greater the opportunity the greater the obligation!"

"We can never hope to see a great spiritual awakening in America today until the church sets about to obey the last command of its rightful head."

— William D. Furry, Ashland College professor of philosophy and later president (1911–19) and dean (1919–33).

— ◇ —
"There was a time when men said we [The Brethren Church] had no reason
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The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



January-February 2000

Volume 13, Number 3

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

Today as I write to you I am looking out my window at a sky which truly looks "wintery." There are blue patches, but there are also large white clouds with dark undersides which mean some snow. Surrounding areas have received some measurable snowfall; although there have been flurries here, we have been spared any amount of the white stuff.

From my window I also see many birds as they feast at our bird feeders. So far we have seen chickadees, flickers, nuthatches, blue jays, doves, cardinals, purple and yellow finches, a pigeon hawk, and the inevitable sparrows. Don wonders why we must feed the sparrows. Occasionally I need to remind him that God made them and they need to eat just like the more beautiful and exotic varieties! They are all so interesting and I love watching them.

Speaking of eating, we just experienced the biggest "eating" day of the year! I must admit I thoroughly enjoyed the wonderful variety of food that Tracy, other family members, and guests contributed to a grand Thanksgiving feast. Even more wonderful than the food was the fellowship we enjoyed as children of a loving Heavenly Father.

Now I consider the jumble of activities which are scheduled in December: Sunday School class parties, the W.M.S. meeting, cantata rehearsals, dinner for the Senior

(continued on page 3)

GOD'S WORK IN INDIA

An inspirational talk given by Linda Immel
General Conference, August 5, 1999

*"... they gathered the church together and reported
all that God had done through them . . ." Acts 14:27 (NIV)*

On July 3rd my family (husband Keith, daughter Joyce, and I) joined 11 Youth for Christ (YFC) people for a short-term mission trip to India. We had no idea what we were in for, but we knew God had called us and we knew He would be with us. Today we feel somewhat like Paul on his missionary travels. Joyce and I want to tell you what GOD did through us. And we are dressed in our Indian saris, which Nirmala showed us how to wrap.

We went to India with YFC to help construct a dormitory building for homeless boys. It was very hard work with very few tools and equipment, and the weather was very hot and dry. I realized after the first morning that God **had not** sent me to India to do construction! The second morning when we arrived at the work site, I grabbed a bucket and headed out to the well, because that was the easiest job. Esakkiel, one of the YFC workers, was at the well pumping water and singing a song, "Every single cell in my body is . . .," and I'm thinking "aching," because that's what my body was doing. Instead he was singing:

*Every single cell in my body is
happy,*

*Every single cell in my body is
well.*

*Thank you, Lord, I feel so good,
Every single cell in my body is
well.*

That was the attitude of the Christians we met in India. No matter what they go through, they love the Lord and sing His praises.

After our 10 days in southern

India, we traveled to the Brethren Mission. We boarded the train at Madras and arrived in Rajahmundry 11 hours later. Believe me, we were very thankful to see Prasanth Kumar there waiting for us! We were privileged to be the guests of Prasanth and Nirmala in their home. We met their son, Sudhir; his wife, Latha; and their daughter, Sherill; and we had a wonderful time visiting with all of them.

We didn't realize how big the Brethren Mission really is. First we visited the Tailoring School where about 30 young women attend classes for one year. Each day begins with devotions and prayer and, even though many are Hindu, about one-half will come to believe in Jesus through the teaching they receive at the Tailoring School. The Reading Room is for the public to come to read the newspaper, magazines, and Christian literature. About 25 people use it daily.

At the Typing Institute eight students were hard at work. They use manual typewriters because the electricity is so unreliable, yet they will learn the skills needed to work in an office as a bookkeeper or secretary. That evening we toured the Brethren Clinic where people come from miles away to receive free services and medicines. The doctor sees about 100 patients each night. In each place The Brethren Church is not only meeting the needs of people now, but also is giving them Jesus for eternity through example, devotion, and prayer.

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THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

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The President's Pen (continued)

Saints, and caroling at the nursing homes and to the shut-ins. In the midst of all these activities we are getting ready for Dave and his family to come home on furlough. That will be a highlight of our season.

We are praying for safe flights from Chisinau in Moldova, to Budapest, New York, Chicago, and finally to South Bend. Jonathan will celebrate his seventh birthday the day after their long journey and this will be his first birthday to be spent with grandparents. Even more important than celebrating Jonathan's birthday is the celebration of the birthday of God's Son together as a family. What a blessing that will be!

Only one week after Jesus' birthday will come that day when the new millennium begins. It's amazing to me how little we have heard about having and exercising faith during this time. Should we not expect that our loving God, who created the world and all in it and has sustained it for more than 6,000 years, will get us safely into January 1, 2000? **He is able**—we know that.

Let's approach the new millennium with confidence, standing firm on His promise that He will never leave nor forsake us. This is my prayer for you. God bless.

Charlene
 Charlene Rowser

NOW SEE THIS

Dear Ladies,

Many of you do wonderful sewing projects throughout the year, and I have two new patterns to give you some other options.

First, two sizes of premie gown patterns. These can be made for your local Crisis Pregnancy Center or the neonatal unit in your hospitals. Soft fabrics are used for these—the easiest being interlock knits.

Second, two patterns for chemotherapy turbans. These would be good to give to your local Cancer Society, radiation centers, or oncologists. These are also made from soft knits.

If you are interested in either or both of these patterns, please contact me.

God bless you,
 Joan Merrill, 9300 S SR 3
 Muncie, IN 47302; 765-289-2384
 e-mail: joanmerrill@juno.com

God's Word (continued)

Of course we visited the orphanages, too. First the girls'. The 31 girls had dressed up in their school uniforms for our visit. Six did a dance in our honor. It was really neat! We sang for them and we were going to see their rooms, but the electricity went off, so we didn't get to do that. However, we went up on the roof where we gave each of the girls a simple gift. They enjoyed playing with the balloons and bubbles. These are things that seem so small to us, but the girls were very excited to receive these small gifts.

We also went to the boys' orphanage and spent time playing with the 46 boys there. They have a generator, so we did have lights. Each boy has a small wooden box where he keeps his belongings: school books, an extra shirt, a toothbrush, a pair of shoes, his sleeping mat, and maybe one toy. The thing was, they seemed to be so happy even though they have so little. Kids in America don't appreciate everything they have.

Sunday morning we led the worship service at the Brethren Church. Nirmala introduced me as the old lady of the group, which I think (hope) was a sign of respect! Pastor Kurt Stout preached the sermon, through the help of our interpreter, Prasanth. We were amazed that there were almost as many people outside the church as inside. The Kumars pray that someday they will have the funds to expand the church building. In the evening we traveled to a village to worship. About 50 people prayed to accept Jesus into their hearts—it was a wonderful experience. The Brethren pastor of that village said he would visit each home to follow up with those who prayed.

Monday we participated in the ordination service for two new Brethren pastors. Over 200 pastors came for this special service and for the Pastors' Conference that followed. Prasanth told us they like to present three things to each of the newly-ordained pastors: a Bible, a flashlight (which is very needed in the villages), and a bicycle to make his travel easier.

We also found that God used us during the worst of situations as

witnesses for Himself. Brian Cummins from the Bryan, OH, Brethren Church became very ill and had to be hospitalized. We were thankful that Prasanth and Sudhir were with us to make arrangements for Brian. Throughout the day as we would go into the hospital to pray with him, Brian had opportunities to witness to the nurses and doctors about why we were in India and how God was taking care of him. Isn't our God great!

The Brethren in India believe greatly in the power of prayer. The praying hands on top of the Prayer Tower at the church can be seen far away, and 24 hours a day two Brethren pastors are there praying for the people of India. They pray that their country will come to know the salvation of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Across the road from the Prayer Tower is a Hindu temple to the god of blood. Before the Prayer Tower was dedicated, there were many accidents there, and the Hindu people accepted this as a way to please this god. Since the Tower's dedication, there have been none. Now the people see that the Christian God is mightier than the Hindu god of blood. Each Friday evening the Brethren gather to fast and pray, and the last Friday of the month they pray all through the night. My challenge to you is that you would commit to fast and pray through one meal a week, remembering to pray for our missionaries around the world.

Nirmala sent personal greetings and sincere appreciation for the many cards, letters, and other support you give for the orphans and pastors.

Here are a few suggestions of additional help: sponsor an orphan for \$21 per month; or a Brethren pastor for \$35 per month; or a one-time gift of \$50 for a bicycle. Most of all, continue to pray.

Thank you for allowing me to share our mission trip with you. And may God bless each of you.



The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

At Conference in August we enjoyed talking with and listening to the Immels describe their short-term missions trip to India. Their enthusiasm is contagious! Linda and her family would love to come to your church to tell you more of their travel and of God's work in India. Their address is 2001 East Street, North Manchester, IN 46962; phone: 219-982-8238; e-mail: Linda_Immel@MCS.K12.IN.US

On vacation, I read the classic **Abide in Christ** by Andrew Murray. It is a devotional book with 31 daily meditations, based on many Scripture verses, encouraging the believer who abides *in* Christ. Although the book was originally written in 1885, I found an inexpensive reprint from 1979.

Frequently we sing the hymn "Abide *with* Me," but Mr. Murray admonishes us to abide *in* Christ—and there is a difference. This expresses the joy of being in God's presence every moment of every day.

On Day 14 the reading relates to the Children of Israel who received manna each morning and that sustenance was enough for the day. Just as the Israelites gathered the day's physical food in the morning, so should we gather spiritual food in the morning. Time spent when we feed on the Word from God gives us the firm foundation for the day. This helps us to abide in Him.

To you who aren't in the habit of morning devotions, I have probably heard your excuse. Get up five minutes earlier, carry Bible verses on cards in your pocket or purse for thinking en route to work. I found the axiom was true, "If you're too busy to spend time with God, you are too busy." Time is one of God's gifts and we should be good stewards.

This could be a new resolution for you in 2000. Instead of sending a request to God via a prayer, receive a message from Him via a Bible verse card.

Your friend,

Joan
Joan

The Brethren Church in the New Millennium

What the Brethren think

What do Brethren in local churches think about the future of The Brethren Church in the new millennium. To get their opinions, several questions were sent by e-mail to more than 150 Brethren on the National Office e-mail list. Thirteen people responded. Overall their answers were very positive. Unfortunately, space does not permit including everything they wrote. But here are several of the questions and a sampling of their responses.

Question: What are your thoughts about the future of The Brethren Church as we reach this major milestone and begin the year 2000?

I am excited about the church in this next century! God is still on His throne and is working in and through His church. My prayer and hope for individual Brethren churches is (not necessarily in any order): (1) Pastoral and personal renewal; (2) Approaching ministry in a progressive, intentional, and culturally relevant manner (1 Cor. 9:22), which means a willingness to change (standing on principles, not preferences) and attempting new approaches to reach the next generation(s) for Christ; (3) Having God's heart for lost people; (4) Opening our hearts and

doors (church and homes) to those of different cultures, nationalities, walks of life; (5) Becoming even more a people of prayer.

— Lee Solomon, Dean of Institutional Development, Ashland Theological Seminary

The key for the Brethren in the next several years will be seen in our willingness to submit to the One responsible for building His church. Are we on our knees, in the Word, washing one another's feet, and loving the unlovable? Truly the Lord must rejoice over people like that whom He can use to build his kingdom. . . .

One bit of encouragement: If we truly believe that our youth are our next leaders, then let us seek to let our church budgets reflect such a thought. A dynamic youth program would radically hit The Brethren Church in such a way that we would not know what hit us!

— Eric Bargerhuff, doctoral student, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

We are standing on the precipice of great blessing. (1) The very medium [e-mail] by which I am writing you could make it possible for us to share with one another and unite the Brethren as never before if used

right. (2) The very decline of the church must eventually make people do some waking up. Perhaps some God-loving people will stand up in enough numbers to make a difference. . . .

— Ralph John, pastor, Quiet Dell, Pa., and Cameron, W. Va., Brethren Churches.

Question: Are you optimistic about the future of The Brethren Church in the 21st century? If so, why?

Absolutely, positively optimistic about the future of The Brethren Church! Number one, God is in control, and we stand on the Word of God. Number two, the young people in our denomination are into Christ, and into our church. But we must be aggressive (or wildly assertive) in our efforts to share Christ and to grow our churches. We've got an incredibly good thing going here, but we need to quit keeping it a secret. Bring on the next century, and let's fasten our seatbelts and get ready for the rides of our lives! Let's be a little daring!

— Don Belsterling, Pastor of Youth Discipleship, Park Street Brethren Church, Ashland, Ohio

I am optimistic about the revival sweeping our younger generations. Many recent tragedies have caused young people to stand up for what they believe. . . . Twenty years ago, it was taboo to be labeled a Christian as a young person.

— Rick Miller, Director of the Brethren Retreat Center, Shipshewana, Ind.

Am I optimistic about the future of The Brethren Church in the 21st century? Yes, and the reason is simple. We serve a Risen Savior, who holds the future, and The Brethren Church, in His hands. He has promised to never leave us; to never forsake us; and He has promised to come back for His people; and I believe He is a Keeper of Promises. So no matter what the future holds, I am optimistic.

— James F. Black, pastor, College Corner Brethren Church, Wabash, Ind.

I am optimistic about the Brethren in the next century, however, I think there is a need to evaluate our pres-
(continued on next page)

A look to the past

(continued from page 6)

for existence. But as the years have passed it has begun to dawn that we do occupy a unique place among the denominations. Two tendencies are evident. We have ceased to be as exclusive as the German Baptists from whom we sprang. And yet we stand among the church of the world as champions of great Bible truths neglected by them.

"On the other hand we have ceased to believe that we are the only people who will be saved. And on the other,

we have stood with unflinching fidelity to the great truths for which the Brethren were first organized in Germany."

— J.L. Gillian, Brethren scholar, pastor, and later Ashland College professor and president (1907–11)

— "The boundary between the church and the world today is but an imaginary line, instead of an impassable barrier fixed by the Christ himself."

— J.C. Mackey, Brethren pastor, president of Ashland College (1897–1889), and later a teacher at the college.

The Brethren Church

(continued from page 7)

ent system of government. Major decisions are made by too few people, and not enough vote by the two councils. Personally, I cannot see much improvement over that of the past. We know that we are in times of indifference and lack of spiritual desire. Much prayer and revival are needed.

— Bill Curtis, retired Brethren pastor, Tucson, Ariz.

I couldn't be more optimistic for the next century in the work of the Lord which was given to us here in Peru. The reason why is because the impact of our way to understand the Bible, and the way to live what we have learned attracts attention and there is power in that testimony, because the harvest is ready to be collected. . . .

— Miguel Antunez, Brethren Missionary, Lima, Peru

As I reflect on the last twenty years of the church, I believe we as a church have good reason to be optimistic about the near future. We have developed some tested and tried paradigms for establishing new Brethren churches with larger core groups and with a higher probability of success. We have dealt with some potentially explosive issues (baptism, women in ministry, ordination of divorced persons) with a respectful, issue-oriented approach that has been able to maintain the unity of the body. We have had a series of powerful General Conferences in which we have sensed the moving of the Spirit and developed a more unified vision. We have as many men and women training for ministry at the seminary as we have ever had. There is an exciting spiritual maturity and sensitivity among our young people . . . average Sunday worship attendance continues to increase. Our leaders have a better sense of who we are as Brethren and of our unique calling than has generally been true for some time. . . .

— Dale Stoffer, Professor of Historical Theology, Ashland Theological Seminary

Question: What one thing (or two or three things) would you like to see God do in The Brethren Church in the next decade or in the next 25 years?

(1) See Jesus return. (2) See The Brethren Church lead the way in evangelism. (3) Use The Brethren Church to help prepare the way for Jesus' coming!

— Dennis Sigle, pastor, Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church

That 1,000 churches would be planted by the year 2050.

— Jim Boyd, church-planting pastor, Rock Springs Community Church, Carlsbad, Calif.

What I would like to see God do in The Brethren Church is wake us up on a personal level. Many of us, myself included, have become too complacent in our personal relationship with Christ. . . . we are involved in our church activities, we pray, we have our quiet times, but the issue is what are we doing for the upbuilding of the kingdom? What are we doing to spread the good news of the Gospel in our daily life? . . . I would like to see us both corporately and individually become intentional in the sharing of Jesus. . . . The key word here is intentional. I need to become intentional in sharing Jesus, and I would like to challenge the Brethren to become intentional as well. If each of us could win even one soul to Christ in the year 2000 think what the growth would be!!

— Corky Fisher, employee at The Carpenter's Shop, the Brethren bookstore in Ashland, Ohio

Raise up 100 strong leaders to enter into full-time ministry as pastors to lead our congregations. To have 50 new church plants initiated by established churches creating sister churches. To see a greater emphasis on the value of Christian camping by church leaders beyond the realm of summer camp for youth. . . .

— Rick Miller (see above)

For the next decade and for the next 25 years ahead of us, I see more Brethren churches established in the city of Lima and the rest of the country. Right now there are two places about to be open under the supervision of the national church. Manuel Talledo and Jorge Escudero will be equipped to open two churches as soon as the Spirit tells us to send them.

— Miguel Antunez (see above)

I would like the Lord to continue to do what He has been doing: challenge us to share and show the Good News of Jesus; perhaps revealing to us new ways this can be accomplished. He's been doing His part and will continue to do so; of that I am sure. But we do have the obligation to respond to that challenge by giving ourselves completely to the task.

— James F. Black (see above)

My two passions while a pastor and even as an ATS professor have been church planting and discipleship. I would truly desire to see The Brethren Church grow deeper in its relationships with the Lord and with one another and to extend the church through the planting of new bodies of Christ throughout the United States and the world.

— Dale Stoffer (see above)

Question: What is your vision for The Brethren Church in the 21st century?

To be **Brethren**: believers who do not just talk the talk but are willing to **walk the walk** of Christ! To die if need be for what we believe, as our Brethren of the past have done!

— Dennis Sigle (see above)

To become a leader in the revival to "serve others" that is sweeping the world. We have been playing catch up for many years. With creative leadership and committed laity, The Brethren Church can set the standard, not follow it.

— Rick Miller (see above)

In many ways my vision for the church in the next century mirrors the vision that motivated the Progressive Brethren in the last century: trained and committed leaders; the expansion of the church through home and foreign missions; an approach to the faith that is more concerned about the inner life of surrender and service to Christ than the external trappings of numbers, status, and recognition. God wants to do a wonderful work through The Brethren Church. We will see it happen as we remain faithful to his Word and sensitive to the leading of his Spirit.

— Dale Stoffer (see above)

Accent on a Brethren Student at Ashland University

Dave Schrecengost



Below is the second in a series of interviews between Dr. Michael Gleason, Director of Religious Life at Ashland University, and Brethren students on the Ashland campus.

Dr. Gleason: This is a particular pleasure for me to have you at Ashland, David, as I also had the honor to be your first pastor 18 years ago at Pleasant View Brethren Church. Take a moment to tell about yourself and about your involvement in The Brethren Church.

David: My name is Dave Schrecengost, and I'm a freshman at Ashland University. I've been a member of BYIC for as long as I've been old enough. My home church is Pleasant View Brethren in Vandergrift, Pa. On the local level, I was president of our BYIC for three years before I came to college. I also served as vice-president of the Pennsylvania District BYIC for two years before I came to Ashland. Now I am serving my second year on the National BYIC Steering Committee.

Dr. Gleason: What helped you decide to enroll in Ashland University?

David: I have wanted to come to Ashland University ever since I was old enough to think about college. I think one of the biggest factors that made me choose Ashland was the school's Brethren background. Although there are expenses involved in attending a private school like Ashland, I've found that there is also a lot of support, which has enabled me to be here.

Another factor was the small, private atmosphere. The student-to-teacher ratio is 16:1. I came from a small high school and was used to small classes. Also the "Accent on the Individual" motto really im-

pressed me. I know it's true because any problem that I have had here so far has been solved because faculty members care about students.

Dr. Gleason: I've been impressed by the way you and other Brethren students have been involved during your first semester. Describe some areas of ministry in which you have served since coming to Ashland.

David: I've tried to get involved in as much ministry as possible. One of the main things I do is play bass guitar in the praise band for HOPE fellowship. I've also gotten involved in missions. I went on a one-day mission trip to Columbus in October.

"But mainly pray that God would move over this campus and bring a great revival, and that many would come to know Him."

That opened a lot of doors for me to grow in my faith. You really have to trust that God will use you because He called you to the field. This trip prompted me to further my missions work. I felt that God was calling me to go to Orlando for a week during Christmas break for a mission trip. So I will be going to Florida as well.

I also do a Christian radio show on campus with Rachel Pennington. We play only Christian music. It's really awesome because people call in and request secular stuff because they don't realize that this isn't the "church music" they are used to.

I'm also involved in a Bible study on campus. We have it right in the lobby on our dorm floor. It's great to have it there because some of the unsaved guys look in and ask what we are doing.

Dr. Gleason: What are some challenges you have experienced at Ashland?

David: It's hard to be independent in college. You must learn how to manage your time. I'm still working on that. My grades are decent—nothing lower than a B—but I know I can do better. I am sure that with experience I will learn how to make the most of my time. I've also found it to be challenging to have students in the dorm who don't share my values and lifestyle choices.

Dr. Gleason: Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

David: In ten years I would like to be a Brethren pastor or youth pastor. I feel that God has called me to full-time ministry. I am open to God's calling though, so I'm not sure where I will be in ten years.

Dr. Gleason: David, many of our readers remember Ashland University regularly in their prayers. How specifically can we pray for you, as well as for the university?

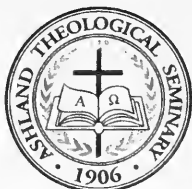
David: They can pray for me that I would get many witnessing opportunities here at Ashland. Also pray that my grades stay good. But mainly pray that God would move over this campus and bring a great revival, and that many would come to know Him. [✠]

Brethren Impact Through Prayer News

The Jesus Film is an incredible witnessing tool for effective outreach. Filmed in the Holy Land, it tells the story of our Lord Jesus Christ. It has been translated into more than 520 languages, shown in more than 230 countries, and seen by more than two billion people! It has also been an effective witnessing tool for those who are participating in the **Lighthouses of Prayer** movement.

The film is available on video for \$5 each in quantities of five or more. A new video, *The Moment of Truth 2*, is also available that targets youth. You can order both films to preview for \$10 total. Call the Jesus Video Project at 888-537-8736 or log on to www.jesusvideo.org for more information or to order the *Jesus Film/Moment of Truth 2* video package.

— Karen Frado



A week in the life of Ashland Theological Seminary

IN 1906, Dr. J. Allen Miller, president of Ashland College, stepped down from that position to become head of the newly-formed Ashland Theological Seminary. It was a bold move on his part, and one of great sacrifice. But that was Dr. Miller's nature and character. He liked challenges, and he believed that what he was doing was of paramount importance to the work of God's kingdom.

Over the next 27 years, Dr. Miller had many opportunities to leave Ashland to take positions in other educational institutions. But every

time such an opportunity came along, he turned it down in order to stay and complete what he had begun at Ashland Theological Seminary.

Dr. Miller was a scholar, an educator, and a great leader. He was also a man of vision. But one wonders if even he envisioned what Ashland Theological Seminary would become today.

What has Ashland Theological Seminary become today? To get an idea, take a journey through a normal week at the seminary.

MONDAY

7:00 a.m. Morning prayers in the chapel. Students and faculty gather informally to begin the week with prayer.

8:00 a.m. Classes begin. During the current academic year, 282 different



courses are being offered on campus or at one of the off-campus sites.

As students gather, some come from on-campus housing or from homes in the Ashland community. But many drive to the campus from more than sixty miles away.

Several of the students arrived on the campus Sunday evening, having driven a distance of 300 miles or more. They stayed in overnight housing on campus and walk

across the street this morning to begin another week of classes.

9:40 a.m. Chapel. Students fill the chapel to overflowing. Attending chapel is not mandatory, but nevertheless many students choose to come. As a result, seats are

hard to find. Chapel is an extension of the seminary's educational process—not of the academic process but the process of shaping the inner soul. Hymns, songs, prayers, adoration, and proclamation are all the order of the day as students and faculty reach out to God and continue their process of transformation.

12:00 noon. Students gather in informal groups for lunch. Some go to fast-food restaurants off campus, others go to their apartments, still others share a common meal in the student fellowship area. Some fast; some pray.

1:30–4:30 p.m. Classes continue. Language classes, especially Greek



and Hebrew, are the order of the day for the afternoon, as well as an array of courses on ministry practice and theological thought.

6:00-9:00 p.m. Night classes. Classes are held Monday through Thursday nights. In these classes you begin to see the wide array of students who attend Ashland Theological Seminary. Many have come from day jobs to take courses at night. It is not uncommon to find lawyers, doctors, teachers, and truck drivers in the same class, all with the common purpose of knowing God more fully.

EVERY DAY

This pattern repeats itself every day of the week. Classes meet every morning, afternoon, and

bers. Together they provide vast opportunities for theological education to people in these cities. It is all part of the outreach and extension of the seminary, as it becomes a seminary without walls.

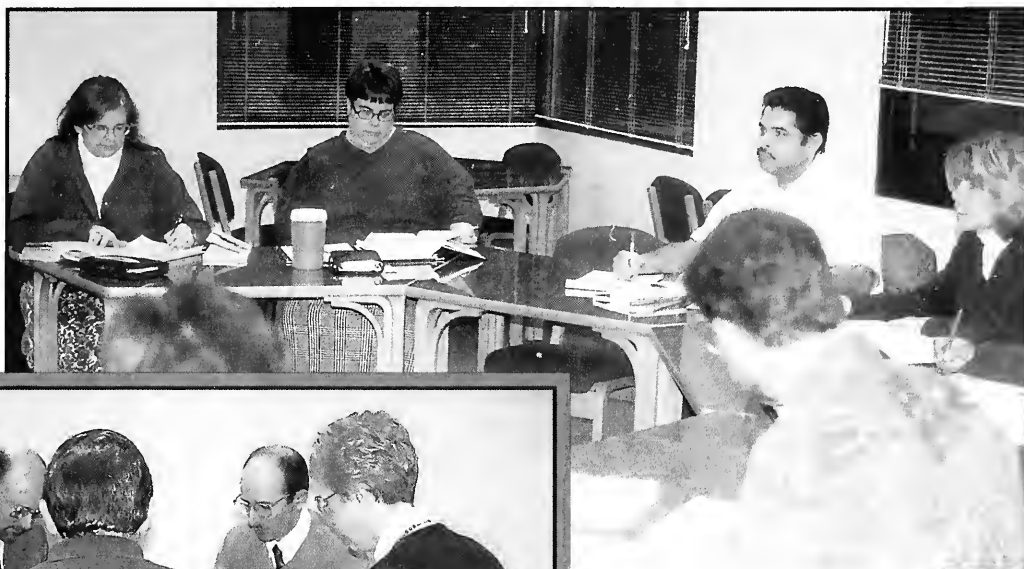
WEDNESDAY

Wednesdays are unique at the Seminary. On Wednesdays students and faculty are invited to join to-

tian agencies around the country offering hope to people in need.

WEEKENDS

Fridays and Saturdays are no less unique. Weekend courses are offered on 45 of the 52 weekends of the year. These intensive courses have made it possible for students to do intensive study amidst all the other responsibilities they juggle.



evening—all designed to challenge and prepare students for the opportunities of ministry. But there are also a few special twists and turns in the weekly schedule.

On Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoons, you will see faculty members assembling in the parking lot to begin drives to various destinations in Ohio and Michigan. Some will drive at least three hours. All will teach classes that evening. Some will stay overnight and teach the next evening as well.

Faculty members from Ashland teach courses in Cleveland, Columbus, and Detroit. They are joined in those cities by ATS faculty members who live there, and also by a number of ATS adjunct faculty mem-

bers. Together they provide vast opportunities for theological education to people in these cities. It is all part of the outreach and extension of the seminary, as it becomes a seminary without walls.

Thursdays, known as "counseling days," are likewise unique. On the Ashland campus and at EMERGE Ministries in Akron, nearly 120 ATS students are taking classes in pastoral counseling. These counseling programs have developed national reputations for excellence and have received certification from the State of Ohio. Graduates from these programs serve in churches and Chris-

When Sunday comes, the campus grows quiet. But student activity has not ceased. Throughout the State of Ohio and beyond, in small towns, country parishes, and large cities, you find ATS students ministering to God's people in a variety of ways. They put into practice the very knowledge and experience they received during the week.

While this is a typical week, it does not begin to capture all that takes place at Ashland Theological Seminary. And while nearly 800 students participate in the life of the seminary during an average week, it is impossible to count how many more are touched by the ministry of the seminary through its faculty, students, and graduates, as they minister to thousands in the name of Jesus every week.

Thank you, Dr. J. Allen Miller, for your vision and sacrifice, which—coupled with the vision and sacrifice of all those who have followed you—have made Ashland Theological Seminary what it is today. [J]



Monthly events make for a busy fall at Mulvane Church

Mulvane, Kans. — It was a busy fall for the Brethren of Mulvane. In September the parsonage was given a facelift with the addition of vinyl siding and new window trim.

In October, Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, led revival services at the church. The focus of the revival was "Who Am I and Why Am I Here?"



Clowning around are Mulvane Pastor Joe Hanna (l.) and Bob Belcher.

The featured event in November was a craft bazaar and bake sale, sponsored by the Women's Missionary Society of the church. Making the bazaar a little bizarre was the presence of clowns—Pastor Joe Hanna and Bob Belcher, assisted by Randy Brown, Wes Casey, Charlotte and Felicia Diener, Tim Epp, Andrew Fortine, Robert Hansard, Johnathon Hunter, Donnie Laurie, Josh Phillips, Sarah Raab, Tom Stoeckel, and Carolyn Tucker. The event was very successful, with proceeds totaling \$1,271.

— reported by Sara Hanna

The great use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.

— William James

Pig roast draws standing-room-only crowd to Cross Keys Worship Center in October

Port Republic, Va. — "If we cook it, they will come" was the conviction of Brethren at the Cross Keys Worship Center. So they cooked a 200-pound pig, and, as expected, people came — in droves, about 150 of them, so many people that there was standing-room only.

Cross Keys Pastor Pat Velanzon got to use his special "pastor appreciation" gift for the occasion—a portable cooker made from a fuel tank by church members Mike Lambert and Mike Eye. They even mounted it on wheels so that it could be towed to any "roasting occasion."

Pastor Velanzon put it to good use. He and Joe Barnett began roasting the pig at nine o'clock on Friday morning, October 29, and continued until 3:00 p.m. At that time four more men arrived to cut up the meat. Another crew set up tables and chairs inside the church building. Soon people from the church and community began arriving, bringing covered dishes and beverages. Then the eating began.

In addition to enjoying the delicious food, the group was entertained by the church's own South



Cross Keys Pastor Pat Velanzon (center) with cooker-builders Mike Lambert (l.), Mike Eye, and the cooker.

River Gospel Band. The band not only performed, it gave others the opportunity to join in on the singing and playing. Writes Kathy Velanzon, wife of the pastor, "We praise God for wonderful opportunities to 'party' for him."

— reported by Kathy Velanzon

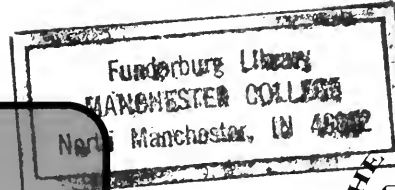
The Cross Keys Brethren hosted another meal on Veteran's Day in November, this one to honor veterans. Using posters, handouts, and newspaper ads, the congregation invited veterans and their spouses for a meal and a musical program.

Approximately 85 people, 30 of them veterans, attended the event. Each veteran told what branch of the armed forces he or she served in and the number of years served. All seemed to appreciate being honored in this way. This is the second year the Cross Keys group has held this event. [✚]

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The Brethren Evangelist

Vol. 122, No. 2 A newsletter for Brethren people February 2000

Four ways to make your church attendance bulge

By Charles Arn

Seventy of every one-hundred members of your church should be in worship every weekend.

THE TYPICAL CHURCH will see 35 to 40 percent of its members in worship on a typical Sunday. Some church leaders have come to accept this as normal. Yet many growing churches regularly see twice that percentage of members each weekend.

Here are four suggestions to significantly increase your members' attendance in the coming year:

1. Renew membership vows

Many couples have shared the significant experience of renewing their wedding vows after years of marriage. The renewal ceremony helps spouses revisit and recommit to their pledge for a lifetime of love and faithfulness. Why not provide a similar opportunity for your people to revisit their church membership commitments?

A church in Orange County, California, developed a series of morning worship services focusing on the church's membership vows—what they are, what they mean, why they are significant. Then on the concluding Sunday they developed an order of ceremony for a "Renewal of

Membership Vows" open to all who still believed in their original commitment to Christ and the church.

2. Set personal attendance goals

Most of us realize that setting goals helps us improve our performance. The same principle applies in the church.

A church in Dallas, Texas, found that by encouraging members to set personal worship attendance goals for the coming year, the congregation experienced a ten-percent increase in average attendance. The church has since enlarged this emphasis to encourage members to set personal goals in Bible study, tithing, adult Sunday school class attendance, and number of people they plan to invite to church in the coming year. A measurable increase was observed in each area.

3. Begin an inquirer's class

Most growing churches provide an opportunity for people who are interested in joining the church to learn about what it means to be a member—before they join. If you don't have such a class, consider starting one. Plan on conducting it at least six times a year. If you do have such a class, be sure you include sessions on the expectations

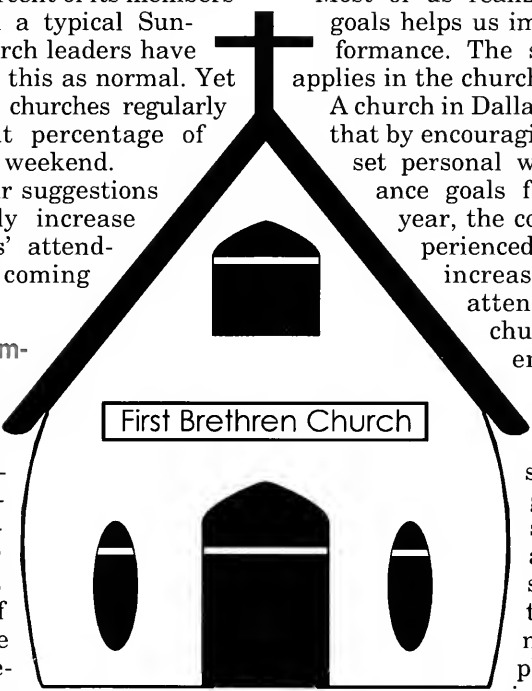
of membership—including regular worship attendance.

4. Monitor attendance and respond to inactivity

When a person's worship attendance begins to fluctuate, that is the first sign the person may leave by the "back door." When members miss three Sundays in a row for no specific reason, the chances that they will leave for good increases dramatically. When people miss a Sunday or two, they are asking, "Does anyone know or care that I'm gone?" If no one seems to notice, their fears are confirmed and they enter the "drop-out track." Furthermore, research indicates that it takes only eight to ten weeks for a person to sever his or her psychological ties to a church.

Identify who is missing in your worship service next Sunday, develop a personal and sincere way of saying "We missed you," and you will see the number of worshipping members increase. [†]

*Dr. Charles Arn is president of Church Growth, Inc., Monrovia, Calif. His latest book is **How to Start a New Worship Service** (Baker Books).*



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One man's dream for the future of The Brethren Church

By Tim Garner

In the article "The Brethren Church in the New Millennium—What the Brethren think," printed in last month's EVANGELIST (pp. 7 & 8), only 12 of the 13 Brethren who responded to questions about the future of The Brethren Church were quoted. The 13th response was quite lengthy and written in such a way that it was not feasible to extract short quotations to use in that article. The response has a powerful message, however, one that Brethren need to read. Therefore, with the writer's permission, it is being printed here in its entirety.

I BELIEVE that the impact of The Brethren Church in the future depends directly on the depth of her desperation for and devotion to God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Guarded optimism

- I am optimistic about our future to the degree that we commit ourselves anew and afresh to the disciplines of the Christian faith, from praying and fasting to study, giving, and action.
- I am optimistic to the degree that credit card debt is replaced by indebtedness to Christ.
- I am optimistic to the degree that we are less about our church "club" and more about compassion for lost people, whatever the cost.
- I am optimistic to the degree that we Brethren eschew the morality of the world and live out the eternal truth of scripture. This would manifest itself in

Brethren not supporting the industries or media that encourage and promote violence, abuse, gratuitous sex, profanity, abortion, homosexuality, etc.

- I am optimistic to the degree that we see ourselves in a spiritual battle and not on a Sunday drive through the country.
- I am optimistic to the degree that Brethren get back to the simple life rather than believing that material possessions satisfy and create happiness.
- I am optimistic to the degree that Brethren, therefore, live sacrificially and are more concerned about Matthew 28:18–20 and Acts 1:8 than about how people dress when they come to worship, the color of their skin, or how a specific sports team is doing.
- I am optimistic to the extent that we learn to love and care for spiritual life and growth more than the next sale at Meijer, Wal-Mart, or other stores. I believe that we can impact the world as each one reaches one for Christ. I believe we must become desperate for the heart of God.

A vision of God

The Brethren Church can reach the world when a vision of God replaces our myopic world view. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and responded the only way a wholly-devoted follower can: "Here am I. Send me!" Can we say, "Send me wherever you need me. Use me however you need to. Make my life a testimony in whatever way best serves You"? We pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done . . ." To the degree

that we fully embrace those words and the wonder of the LORD God, I believe He can transform the world through us!

I believe Him for this vision. I can see the LORD, high and lifted up, helping us double the number of Brethren congregations in the next 25 years. I can see God continuing to impact the world through the training institutions of Ashland Theological Seminary and Ashland University. I can believe that God will challenge the Brethren to bequest \$100 million over the next 25 years to support the vision He has for us. These funds would support congregational ministry and missionary outreach.

Living out the heart of God

I can believe that The Brethren Church in the United States will keep pace with the number of conversions in India. I can see God removing or refining limited congregationalism and replacing it with a more efficient form of church government. I believe that when we become desperate about living out the heart of God, the denominational sins of suspicion, doubt, envy, jealousy, factions, and discord will be replaced by the fruit of the Spirit. I believe that God can bring Christians to maturity and teach us to trust one another so that we deal with conflict and differences of opinion in biblically-mandated ways.

As I reread these words, I know that they are a dream. The skeptic will say, "There's no way." The indifferent will say, "Those are pretty bold statements. We'll see if they come to pass." The faithful will say, "Change my heart, O God. I am only one, but I am one. So here am I. Send me!"

Jesus used the Eleven to start a worldwide movement. What can He do with a thousand times as many Brethren? [✠]

Rev. Garner is pastor of the Elkhart First Brethren Church.

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Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kaufmann

The millennium begins:

Take a spiritual inventory of your life!

By Emanuel W. Sandberg

IN THE FIRST issue of the EVANGELIST this year, I outlined the current state of God's church and then suggested that "The Brethren Church needs to become a First Century Christian Church again, helping all people come to know and experience Jesus" (*Jan. issue, pp. 1-3*). As believers and followers of Jesus, that is our mission in life—to help all people come to know and experience Jesus.

Even though we acknowledge **our** role under the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), we Brethren have a tendency to delegate responsibility for evangelism to our pastors or to a periodic visiting "evangelist." But what do **we** do? The answer for most of us is that we do nothing!

It is time for us to take inventory. We need to take stock of our lives. What things are holding us back? God created each one of us for a purpose. Each one of us is destined to accomplish certain things. Therefore we need to take stock and take control of our lives!

When Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age," He told us what to do. Furthermore, in His ministry Jesus showed us how to do it. The form of discipleship that Jesus practiced is a clear example of **multiplication** in the area of leadership development.

Most local church evangelistic programs are designed to **add** new believers to our congregations. The in-

herent problem with **this** approach, is that it is a linear procedure. No matter how fast this process moves, we can never catch up with the explosion of people in the world.

To carry out the Great Commission productively, we need to continue congregational efforts to reach lost individuals in the community. But we also need to plant new congregations in the United States and in the rest of the world in order to **multiply** our soul-winning efforts.

Look at it this way. Compare your church to a vital, productive apple tree. God has set natural limits to the size of an apple tree and, therefore, to the number of apples a tree

can produce. For an apple tree to produce even more apples, it must produce **new trees**. New trees are the real fruit of an apple tree. New trees are fundamental to continued growth and to the preservation of the apple species.

In other words, planting new churches is the "multiplication factor" in God's plan for our denomination and for your local church. Therefore, I challenge you to **become an active church-planting supporter**. In your Sunday school or small group meetings, discuss **your** church-planting role. Which church plant will you sponsor? What can your group do—as a group and as individuals within that group?

Will you go and help establish the new church? If so, what talent can you bring to the church-planting team? What resources will you commit? God has given you a mission. What are you doing about it?

My challenge to you is simply this: take an inventory of your life and ask God what plans He has for you—for the rest of your life? We are blessed by God! As you praise God for the gifts He has given you, ask Him what He wants you to give back to Him. If you ask, He will reveal His plan for your life and show you where He needs your help. [†]

Dr. Sandberg is Executive Director for The Brethren Church.

Doing the "greater work" for General Conference

"Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work."

—Oswald Chambers

THE Congregational Ministries Council is announcing a special emphasis on prayer for this year's General Conference, to be held August 7-11 at Estes Park, Colorado.

Beginning March 5 and continuing for the six months prior to General Conference, we are asking that all Brethren designate the first Sunday of each month as a day for special prayer focusing

on Conference. For each of these months specific prayer requests will be provided to help direct your prayers.

This will be a great Conference, with messages by several highly-acclaimed and nationally-known speakers. But the greatest impact of this Conference will be the impact that results from our prayers.

As we make prayer a daily part of our lives, our lives are energized spiritually, our faith is renewed, and we have the power literally to change the world. Let's start praying now for the outcome we want to see from General Conference at Estes Park.

—Dan Lawson, Director of Congregational Ministries

A first-hand look at the work of World Relief in Sudan and Rwanda

By Reilly R. Smith

WORLD RELIEF is making remarkable progress at changing lives in Sudan. I had the opportunity to visit Southern Sudan with Dr. Clive Calver, president of World Relief, in October 1998.* Last December (1999) I returned to Southern Sudan with Dr. Calver, his wife Ruth, World Relief vice-president Ahuma Adoadgi, and two pastors from the United States. The changes I saw were miraculous!

Liethnom

One of the areas I revisited in December was Liethnom. When we went to Liethnom in October 1998, the majority of the people we saw had no clothes. Now they do. In 1998 the church and the school in Liethnom met under a large tree. Now the tree is inside the new World Relief compound. There is also a school compound with five buildings to provide rooms for the various classes. The church meets in one of these school buildings.

A bombed-out veterinary center has been converted into a medical compound with beds, examination rooms, storage facilities, and even a small minor-surgery facility. The compound is very humble, but very functional.

World Relief workers helped the people of Liethnom plant gardens and establish an experimental agricultural station. The first diversified crops ever were planted in early 1999. The first harvest was very small because the crops were planted at a bad time, but the second set of crops, nearing harvest in December, was much better. The agricul-

tural specialist from World Relief introduced the first ox-pulled plow to the area.** A new well not only provides the people with safe drinking water, it makes irrigation feasible. Food security in Liethnom is becoming a real possibility.

Pochalla

In Pochalla county, which I also visited in October 1998, World Relief has provided seven wells, five schools, and medical clinics. During our recent visit, we helped the local people break ground for a new central medical compound, which will include a small hospital.

**A plow costs \$80. If you would like to donate a plow, send a check for \$80 to Brethren Missions. Mark the memo section "World Relief—Sudan plows."



Planting cabbage—one of the new crops introduced at Liethnom.

When I visited Pochalla in 1998, we baptized 500 people at the Presbyterian church. In December, we baptized approximately 125 more. The church continues to grow at a tremendous rate. World Relief is working with the New Sudan Council of Churches to provide leadership training in the area and for all of Southern Sudan. Local leaders in Pochalla (church, civil, and military) all asked the American church leaders to carry their gratitude back to the United States. They also asked us to pray for them and especially to help them get training for their church leaders.

After showing us the progress in Liethnom and Pochalla and giving us reports of similar progress in South Bor county, the World Relief leaders asked those of us from the United States to consider two new projects. These are in hard-hit areas closer to where fighting is taking place in Southern Sudan, but in areas still considered secure. We unanimously agreed to recommend the starting of two new projects, one in the Blue Nile region and the other in Rumbek.

The project in the Blue Nile region was given first priority. It will be carried (continued on next page)



Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, uses an African hoe to help break ground for a new medical facility at Pochalla.

*A report of that visit was printed in the November 1998 issue of *Insight into Brethren Missions*.

out in conjunction with the Covenant Church, which is well-established there. We hope that both projects can be accomplished as local churches in the United States generously assist local churches in Southern Sudan.



Kigali, Rwanda

After leaving Southern Sudan in December, we traveled south to the country of Rwanda. The World Relief office in Rwanda is located in the country's capital, Kigali, a city of about 600,000 people.

During the spring of 1994, approximately one million people were killed in Rwanda during a three-month civil war. Almost 800,000 of them were killed during the first two weeks of genocide. We visited a Roman Catholic church where 5,000 people who had taken refuge were slaughtered by death squads. An additional 20,000 more were killed in that area during the next five days. Their bones are all buried in a mausoleum in the church compound, a macabre monument to mankind's ability to be inhumane.

The genocide and ensuing war killed nearly 15 percent of Rwanda's total population. They also left in their wake an AIDS epidemic, extreme poverty, a devastated environment, and a severely damaged church. World Relief is helping the recovery in all areas.

An AIDS epidemic

About 17 percent of the Rwandan population is infected with the HIV (AIDS) virus. Most of the victims are "guilty" of nothing more than sleeping with husbands who contracted the virus while working in other countries, of being raped during the 1994 genocide, or of being born to HIV infected mothers. Dur-

ing the genocide, tens of thousands of women were forced to watch the execution of husbands and children, then were brutally raped and intentionally infected with HIV.

World Relief ministries include AIDS intervention and AIDS prevention through education, coordination of AIDS programs with the health ministry of the Rwandan government, and grants

individuals, mostly women, who use the money as capital to start a business. Individuals receiving loans meet regularly to hold each other accountable for loan repayment, help each other with business decisions, network relationships and ideas, learn about Christ, and spend time in worship. Many lives and families are being saved for both time and eternity through World Relief's community banking programs.

The national coordinator for World Relief would like to help local churches begin to reforest the areas destroyed during the war. World Relief projects will help make the land productive for forestry and agriculture again.



Grime reminders of Rwanda's troubled past. Above left, World Relief President Clive Calver looks at bones of genocide victims kept in the mausoleum of a church where many of them were killed. At right, crosses mark graves of other victims of the genocide. Above, a monument dedicated to martyrs who tried to protect the targeted group from being killed and who were themselves slaughtered by the death squads. World Relief is working with the church in Rwanda in efforts to bring a brighter future to that country.



to independent Christian and church-based AIDS ministries. World Relief is equipping Rwandan churches to take over the AIDS ministries. World Relief will continue to help the government with some coordination of church-based programs.

Immediately following the war, World Relief and other helping agencies began building housing for people displaced by the fighting and for those whose homes were destroyed. These home-building programs are coming to a close. Needs for housing still exist, but the immediate crisis is over.

World Relief also works with churches to conduct community banking ministries in local villages. Small business loans are made to

A ministry in transition

World Relief's ministry in Rwanda is in transition. World Relief's initial work in Rwanda was done as a relief agency. Now the focus is on training Christian church leaders to take over most of the relief and development work World Relief established. Future work will all be done through the churches, except for the coordination of AIDS programs with the government. Even the local staff for this program will come from among the churches. Thus in Rwanda, as in other countries where it is at work, World Relief is staying true to its mission of being a means by which "churches help churches help the poor in the name of Jesus." [J]



Brethren Church Summer Ministries: Making your summer count

By Jaime Gillespie

The Need

Every summer millions of American students rush out of school, throw their books and pencils someplace where they won't have to look at them (much less think about them) for the next few months, and then indulge themselves in three months of relaxing, spending time with friends, and, perhaps, working at a summer job.

In other places young people leave school knowing that they have had their last good meal until next year. They go home to a beat-up shack that leaks when it rains and shudders in the wind. If they are lucky, a parent will be there. Other young people don't even have these luxuries. They have no school, no home, and have never had a good meal.

Besides this physical hunger and suffering, millions of people around the world suffer from a different kind of hunger—hunger to know a God who is loving and kind. They long for a God who cares for the sick and the homeless; who takes little children on His knee and tells them they are loved. They hunger for a God who forgives them when they do wrong and who loves them regardless of their shortcomings. But how are they to know Him?

The Answer

YOU can make a difference to these people! YOU can be one who introduces them to the magnificent God we serve—the God who is merciful, loving, and kind beyond our comprehension.

Many of us think that we are too insignificant to make an impact on the life of another person. We reason that we aren't trained to share the Gospel with these people, so we'll leave it up to those who are trained. They'll do a better job.

One of my favorite quotes says, "I

may not be perfect, but I may be the only example of Jesus Christ that a person ever sees." None of us is perfect, but God still calls us to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). If He can use someone like Paul to spread His message to thousands of people, surely He can use us to do the same! Will you allow God to use you?

This summer The Brethren Church is offering many different ways for you to serve God and help needy people around the world. Whether you are fifteen or well over fifty, God can use you! Whether you want to go half way around the world or stay in your own state, God can use you! You don't need to worry about training—we'll provide it. Don't worry about getting there—we'll find a way. Don't worry about what you'll say to that little girl who is looking to you for advice—God will provide the words!

District Crusaders

Youth who have completed the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade are eligible to serve as District Crusaders. They will remain in their own district and serve three to four weeks at camp, Bible schools, and churches. This is a great opportunity for young people to explore different kinds of ministry without going far from home.

National Crusaders

Young adults who have completed high school can participate in this exciting ministry! National Crusaders are assigned to teams that travel

around the country sharing their gifts and talents in churches, camps, and everywhere they go. This year we hope to have enough people to fill three teams—a Bible school team, a camp team, and a performance team (music/drama). These



Presenting the gospel through a clown ministry in Mexico, teaching vacation Bible school in Jamaica, using puppets to share the Good News at a church or church camp in the U.S., or bringing smiles to children's faces anywhere—these are just a few of the many ministry opportunities open to you through the Summer Ministry Program.

people will complete a week of intensive training and then serve six weeks, ending their summer at the BYIC Convention in Colorado.

Young Adult Ministry Interns

Anyone who has completed high school is eligible to serve as a Young Adult Ministry Intern. In-

"This summer The Brethren Church is offering many different ways for you to serve God and help needy people around the world. Whether you are fifteen or well over fifty, God can use you! Whether you want to go half way around the world or stay in your own state, God can use you!"

terns are placed with pastors, youth directors, worship leaders, or with Christian men and women in secular jobs. Interns spend the entire summer working in fields of

service that they are considering entering. They get to see all aspects of this field, including



the struggles and the joys. They complete the internship with a better understanding of what would be expected of them should they enter this field full time, and knowing whether they like this field or not.

Placing interns with Christian men and women in secular jobs is new this year. The purpose of doing

this is to acquaint people with the wide world of ministry around us. A Christian nurse, for example, can have just as much of an impact on a patient as the hospital chaplain!

Short-Term Mission Trips

If you would like to see first hand how people in another culture live and have the opportunity to share your heart and the Gospel with these people, then a mission trip would be perfect for you. We are offering a variety of teams that will travel to many different places. Also, if you don't see a trip listed below that interests you, but you would still like to go on a trip, please call and we will work with you to design a trip to custom-fit your needs.

Jamaica (July 10–21): This team will travel to the island of Jamaica, where team members will live with and serve people living in extreme poverty in the shadow of glamorous resorts and hotels. Team members see the sights, learn the culture, and have the wonderful privilege of sharing the Gospel with the Jamaican people. In Jamaica you can choose to serve on a work team, a Bible school team, or a music team.

Hurricane, West Virginia, Work Trip (June 25 to July 1): Travel to a poverty-stricken town in a place not that far from where you live and see how people in our own country are affected by mines and steel mills, factories and businesses that shut down and leave families destitute. This team will repair houses, construct new homes, and build relationships with the people of Hurricane.

Inner-City Trip (dates to be announced): Inner cities offer a great opportunity to witness to homeless people, unchurched people, and those who have been hardened by violence and crime. Join us as we

minister to these people at soup kitchens, on the street, and in many other places. This trip will be custom designed for those wishing to take part in inner-city ministry. Possible locations include Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, or Chicago. Dates are flexible.

Guatemala (June 26–July 8, July 10–22, or July 24–August 5): Have you ever thought about going on a missions trip but weren't interested in teaching Bible school or helping with a building project? Would you like to go to a foreign country and work in a professional area that interests you? If so, Guatemala may be the place for you. Here you can work in economic development, agriculture, social work, sports ministry, education, environmental education, physical therapy, or appropriate technology (heat and water resources). Dates are flexible.

Native American Reservation Work Trip (June 11–17 or July 2–8): Native Americans are rich in heritage but are sometimes desperately poor in many other areas. Many live in shacks with no running water, leaky roofs, bad wiring, and unsanitary plumbing. Join a work team as we give the gifts of love and labor to these people.

Mexico (dates TBA): This team will minister to the people of our neighboring country. Mexico is filled with poverty and people searching for hope. This team will offer that hope as well as helping with construction and repairs. Dates for this trip are also flexible.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities or would be willing to offer prayer support for the Summer Ministries Program as a Prayer Warrior, please contact Jaime Gillespie at The Brethren Church National Office (by e-mail, jaime@brethrenchurch.org or by phone, 419-289-1708). [3]

Ms. Gillespie is National Youth Leader for The Brethren Church.



Brethren Ministry Wives: house of cards or building of God?

By Mesu Andrews

HAVE YOU ever made a house of cards? If you have tried this test of nerves, you know that each added card gives a new dimension to the form. It also gives a new potential for disaster! Even a heavy breath can topple the entire structure!

Have you ever watched a house being built—foundations poured, walls put up, rafters added? Each addition to this kind of structure also gives new dimension. But instead of making it more precarious, each element adds stability to the house as the various elements unite to hold it together.

The infant ministry called Brethren Ministry Wives began its building last August at General Conference. But the foundation for this ministry was laid many years ago, when pastors' wives felt a need to "connect." I was recently given a tattered spiral notebook titled simply "Ministers' Wives." The notes in this book are priceless, dating back to 1980. It includes names of women like Julie Flora, Roberta Gilmer, Peggy Beekley . . . and the list goes on. These were some of the women who began the building process.

A survey of needs

Years later, during General Conference in 1997, Cathy Britton and Judy Allison used a survey to give pastors' wives an opportunity to communicate what they need in their lives as soul-mates to men in pastoral ministry. The basic needs expressed by the women fell into five categories:

- For pastors' wives to be recognized as a group with unique needs.
- A newsletter relevant to those needs—sent to the wives at home, not to the church.
- A mentoring program or some way for the wife of a new pastor to connect with an experienced pastor's wife. (Both new and experienced pastors' wives favored this.)

- A way for pastors' wives to communicate personally with each other throughout the year, not just during Conference.
- A positive, uplifting experience when the wives meet together—an atmosphere of caring for one other, but with the focus on God's faithfulness and good gifts.

A new face

After a wonderful discussion at the 1999 pastors and wives retreat in Florida, a plea was made that a group for pastors' wives be started with a new face. It was suggested that this new group include not just wives of pastors, but wives of all men in The Brethren Church involved in vocational ministry—wives of seminary students and faculty members, National Office employees, missionaries, district camp directors, etc.

This new group, called Brethren Ministry Wives, met for breakfast at the 1999 General Conference for fellowship and inspiration. At that time another survey was circulated to collect practical suggestions of ways to continue building this new ministry. The survey also asked for nominees of women who would be effective leaders in beginning this new endeavor. When the results of the survey were tallied, several ministry areas and potential leaders for those areas emerged:

- A Prayer Ministry to unite all Brethren Ministry Wives throughout the year as they lift up each other in prayer. Ann DeVeny will lead this ministry (with support from Jill Stone).
- A Resource Ministry to suggest materials for personal and spiritual growth in our unique areas of need. Carolyn Cooksey and Holly Finks will lead this ministry.
- A Newsletter Ministry to connect us regularly with each other by providing inspirational articles, practical suggestions, and fellow-

ship (by highlighting one or two women in each issue so that we can get to know each other better). I will compile and edit the information for this ministry (with lots of input from lots of others).

- A Mentoring Ministry so that new ministry wives can learn from wives who have experienced the unique challenges and blessings common to their position. We feel certain that this is a ministry we must have, but we have not yet found the woman God has chosen to lead it. (He will provide!)

A crossroads

I believe that Brethren Ministry Wives is at a crossroads. The next few months will reveal whether this ministry is a house of cards built on the desires and whims of a few people, or if it is a house that God is building, offered by Him as a gift beyond all that we could ask or imagine. I pray that it is the latter.

If you are a Brethren Ministry Wife, this is how you can help in that direction. We want to hear from you! We are working to get our first newsletter compiled and mailed. But we need addresses. We have home addresses for the women who attended the breakfast at General Conference. If you were not at the breakfast but would like to be included on the mailing list, please contact me—Mesu Andrews—by phone at 219-773-2263; by e-mail at rometrem@bnin.net; or by mail at 705 N. Main St., Nappanee, IN 46550.

In our first newsletter, we will include some exciting information about special times to meet together at the pastors and wives retreat in May (9–11) and at General Conference in August (7–11). [✚]

Mrs. Andrews, one of the leaders of Brethren Ministry Wives, is a member of Nappanee, Ind., First Brethren Church, where her husband is associate pastor.

General Conference Registration Form

August 7–11, 2000; Estes Park, Colorado

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Home phone # _____ Work phone # _____ E-mail address _____

Names and ages of your children rooming with you _____

Lodging: Three lodges have been reserved for adults attending Conference. Rates depend on the lodge and the number of adults staying in a room (see below). Rates for children apply to children ages 3 through 15 who share a room with their parents. There is no charge for children under 3.

Rooms in all three lodges have full private bath. Rooms in **Wind River Lodge** and **Alpen Inn** have balconies; rooms in **Mt. Ypsilon Lodge** do not. Rooms in **Mt. Ypsilon** accommodate up to four people per room (1 double bed, 1 set of bunk beds). Rooms in **Wind River Lodge** accommodate up to five people per room (2 queen-size beds, 1 single floor futon). Rooms in **Alpen Inn** accommodate up to six people per room (2 queen-size beds, 1 queen-size sofa bed).

Rates per person per day are as follows (rate includes two meals per day, breakfast and dinner):

— — — — — Total number of adults staying in the room — — — — —

Lodge	1 adult	2 adults	3 adults	4 adults	5 adults	6 adults	per child
Mt. Ypsilon Lodge	\$ 87 each	\$55 each	\$44 each	\$39 each	—	—	\$11 each
Wind River Lodge	\$115 each	\$69 each	\$54 each	\$46 each	\$41 each	—	\$11 each
Alpen Inn	\$115 each	\$69 each	\$54 each	\$46 each	\$41 each	\$38 each	\$11 each

Choice of lodging; **check one:** ☐ Mt. Ypsilon Lodge ☐ Wind River Lodge ☐ Alpen Inn ☐ Off campus (camping, staying in a motel; *people staying off campus must make their own arrangements*)

Nights you will be staying **on campus**. (Skip if you will be staying **off campus**.)

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday

Names of any adults who will be sharing the room with you (they must register separately)

If staying off campus, days you will attend General Conference. (Skip if you will be staying **on campus**.)

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday

Estes Park Center requires those staying off campus to pay a \$6 per adult/per day facilities-use fee for each day they attend General Conference; the rate for children age 3 to 15 is \$3 per child/per day (under 3 are free).

Children's Conference (for children 4 years old to those who have completed 6th grade)

Child's Name	Age/Grade Completed	Morning sessions (\$8.00/session)				Evening sessions (\$5.00/session)			
		Tu	Wed	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	Wed	Th
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(continued on next page)

General Conference Registration Form (continued)

Nursery (for babies and toddlers through age 4)

There is no charge for the nursery, but pre-registration is required.

Child's Name	Age	Morning				Evening			
		Tu	Wed	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	Wed	Th
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Afternoon activities

Activity	Cost	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday
<u>Enter number of people</u>				
1. Bus tour of Rocky Mountain National Park (4-hour tour of spectacular scenery; picnic lunch; stops for photos or short hikes)	\$21.00	_____	_____	_____
2. Horseback riding (1½-hour ride) (leisurely ride through mountain forests and meadows; departs at 3:30 p.m.)	\$26.00	_____	_____	_____
3. Horseback riding (2½-hour ride) (similar to above but longer ride with rest break halfway through; departs at 1:45 p.m.)	\$38.00	_____	_____	_____
4. Shopping trip to Loveland Outlet Mall (the \$5.00 is for bus transportation; more than 80 stores; store coupons; departs 1 p.m.)	\$ 5.00	_____	_____	_____
5. Golf tournament on Wednesday afternoon (18 holes; includes cart; club rental extra; questions, call Lee Solomon, 419-289-5906)	\$48.00	_____	_____	_____

Registration Fee Calculation

Lodging

Adult rate per night _____ times _____ (number of adults) times _____ (number of nights) = _____

Child rate per night \$11.00 times _____ (number of children) times _____ (number of nights) = _____

Facilities-use charge (people staying off campus only)

Rate per adult \$6.00 times _____ (number of adults) times _____ (number of days) = _____

Rate per child \$3.00 times _____ (number of children) times _____ (number of days) = _____

Children's Conference (count the number of boxes you checked for each morning and evening)

Total number morning sessions _____ times \$8, plus total number evening sessions _____ times \$5 = _____

Activities

1. Bus tour of Rocky Mountain National Park: Rate \$21.00 times _____ (number of people) = _____

2. Horseback riding (1½-hour ride) Rate \$26.00 times _____ (number of people) = _____

3. Horseback riding (2½-hour ride) Rate \$38.00 times _____ (number of people) = _____

4. Shopping trip to Loveland Outlet Mall Rate \$ 5.00 times _____ (number of people) = _____

5. Golf tournament on Wednesday afternoon Rate \$48.00 times _____ (number of people) = _____

Total. (enclose at least half of this amount with this registration form) _____

Registration Deadline is May 19. Registrations postmarked after May 19 will not be accepted. At least half of the total registration fee is due with this form. **The balance is due by June 1** for you to be registered. There will be a \$25 cancellation fee for cancellations after June 1.

Send to : General Conference Registration, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805



Two Brethren laymen issue matching-funds challenge

Ashland, Ohio — Two Brethren laymen from the Pennsylvania District have issued a \$1,000 matching-funds challenge to raise money to purchase books in Spanish for the library of the South American Theological Seminary (STS) in Argentina.

The seminary in Argentina is in the process of adding books and resources to its library in order to seek accreditation. Ashland Theological Seminary sent 1,000 volumes to begin the library, and the seminary in Argentina recovered another 1,000 volumes that belonged to the former Eden Bible Institute. For accreditation purposes, however, the seminary must have a significant number of theological and biblical volumes in Spanish.

The matching-funds program for the seminary in Argentina is reminiscent of a similar program sponsored by the National Laymen's Organization in the late sixties and early seventies. At that time the laymen joined together to raise funds to purchase books for Ashland Theological Seminary's library. Their efforts likewise enabled ATS to meet accreditation standards for its library.

If you are interested in giving to this project, send your gift to: STS Library Fund, The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. And remember, the gift you give will be matched by the two Brethren from Pennsylvania. [✝]

From the cowardice that dare not
face new truth,
From the laziness that is content
with half truth,
From the arrogance that thinks it
knows all truth,
Good Lord, deliver us.

Prayer from Kenya

Pennsylvania Brethren gather January 15 for a "State of the District" consultation

Jones Mills, Pa. — Sixty-three people from 18 of the Pennsylvania District's 22 churches gathered at the Valley Brethren Church on Saturday, January 15, for a "State of the District" consultation.

The consultation was part of the Pennsylvania Church Health Project, a two-year joint venture of the Pennsylvania District and The Brethren Church National Office. Consultation presenters were district moderator T. J. McLaughlin and Ronald W. Waters, consultant for evangelism/church growth for The Brethren Church. Host pastor Bill Yoder led an opening worship service.

In his "state of the district" report, McLaughlin highlighted district membership and attendance trends and composite scores on church health from the Natural Church Development (NCD) profile. Twenty of the district's 22 congregations completed an NCD profile last fall.

A chart of district membership and attendance from 1946–1998 revealed a 44% decline in membership and a 36% decline in Sunday school attendance. By contrast, worship attendance for the period increased by 41%, with an 11% growth in 1998 alone. While celebrating the growth in worship attendance, McLaughlin said, "My concern is with the number of people who joined our churches but never became involved in congregational life." He based his comment on the wide disparity between membership and attendance figures.

Noting that membership and Sunday school attendances began a slow, steady decline in the late 1960s, he highlighted causes that might have been behind the shift from earlier periods of growth to periods of decline. Not discounting societal and demographic shifts, he focused more on congregational behavior. "We say we believe in community," he said, "but the people we were reaching were never acclimated into our congregations. We weren't doing in the 1940s–1960s what we needed to do to help them become fully committed to the church."

McLaughlin also noted that from 1988–1998 congregations were effective in reaching new people. Statistics for the 10-year period revealed that district churches added 1,190 new members—55% of them by conversion, 25% by

memberships transferred in, and 20% by reclaiming inactive members into active membership. But these gains were offset by membership losses of 1,730. The majority (70%) of the losses—1,207 people—were by reversion, persons removed from membership for inactivity or for leaving the Christian faith. He used these figures to support his contention that churches had failed to effectively disciple and assimilate new people.

Reporting on the church health profile, McLaughlin noted that 18 of the 20 churches have identified at least one of three characteristics as their lowest or second lowest quality. Those three characteristics are gift-oriented ministry, functional structures, and empowering leadership. "It was not just one or two congregations but the vast majority of our churches. This is powerful because it gives us insight into what we need to do to change," he said. The highest-rated characteristics of the district were need-oriented evangelism and inspiring worship services.

After reviewing the composite scores on church health, McLaughlin said, "Let's be honest—there is nothing here to 'write home' about. But there's nothing here to 'jump off the bridge' over either. We are making a shift and starting to become more concerned about the unchurched. We're not out of the woods by any means. But we're also not out of the race. Through Christ, all things are possible."

He encouraged congregations to take advantage of resources and seminars being offered by the district and the denomination to help congregations improve their areas of weakness. He closed his presentation by having participants pray in small groups for the district and for their congregations.

Waters spoke on the essentials of church health, explaining the Natural Church Development profile and the eight quality characteristics it measures. He also led participants in a discussion of the results in congregational groupings and proposed the next steps congregations should follow to address their weakest characteristics.

Following the consultation, McLaughlin said the number of people who came
(continued on next page)



In Memory

Rev. Albert O. Curtright

Rev. Albert O. Curtright, 88, retired Brethren pastor, died December 27 at



United Medical Center West in Cheyenne, Wyo.

Albert was born March 2, 1911, in Arkansas City, Kansas, but spent much of his life in Cheyenne, where he was a founding member and

deacon of the Cheyenne Brethren Church, later returning to pastor the congregation. Prior to that he served Brethren congregations in Carleton, Nebr., and Howe (Brighton Chapel), Milford, and Burlington, Ind. He was an Ashland University trustee and a member of the Seminary Committee. He also served for a time as chairman of the board of the Brethren's Home in Flora, Ind. He retired from pastoral ministry in Cheyenne in 1984.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Viola (Garber), whom he married June 14, 1930, and by two daughters. He is

Pa. District Consultation

(continued from page 11)

and their positive response and commitment to addressing the weaknesses encouraged him. "I think we have a good opportunity to turn things around in this district," he said.

Future district activities will include seminars on each of the eight characteristics at the July 2000 district conference, quarterly consultations and training seminars in 2000-2001, and completion of another profile in the spring of 2001 to evaluate changes. Throughout the next 18 months, congregations will use resources provided by the district and denomination to address areas of weakness.

— reported by Ronald W. Waters

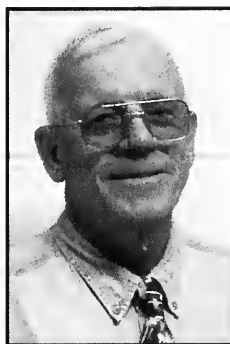
survived by three daughters—Madeline Timmons of Bowie, Tex.; Gracie Grubbaugh of Spencerville, Iowa, and Janenne Thomas of Cheyenne; and by 17 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren.

His funeral service was held January 3 at the Cheyenne Brethren Church with Pastor G. Emery Hurd officiating.

Doran J. Hostetler

Doran J. Hostetler, 62, principal of Riverside Christian School, died unexpectedly on Tuesday, January 25, at his home in Lost Creek, Ky. Doran served at Riverside Christian School for more than 40 years. He served as principal of the school for 30 of those years.

Doran was born March 18, 1937, in Trail, Ohio, the son of Ralph and Eva Hostetler. He was a 1959 graduate of Ashland University.



He is survived by Nancy, his wife of 40 years; a son Chad and his wife Tammy of Bowling Green, Ky; and two daughters—Holly Bowers

(husband Rob and children Derek and Kayln) of Bowling Green; and Lisa Smith (husband Tim and daughter Kaleigh) of Lost Creek.

His funeral service was held Friday, January 28, in the Riverside School gymnasium, with burial on the Riverside campus grounds.

Floyd S. Benshoff

Floyd S. Benshoff, 92, a leader for many years in the National Laymen's Organization of The Brethren Church, went to be with the Lord on January 1.

Floyd was born July 3, 1907, in Johnstown, Pa., son of David F. and Lucinda St. Clair Benshoff. He was married for 54 years to Erma Holsinger Benshoff, who died in 1984. In 1987 he married Rosalie Graybill, who survives him.

For more than 50 years he owned and operated Morrellville Newsstand in Johnstown. He was a lifelong member of the Johnstown, Pa., Third Brethren Church, where he served as deacon, moderator, Sunday school teacher, choir director, and treasurer. He also served for a time as director of the Cambria City Mission in Johnstown. For many years he was editor of *The Brethren Layman*

magazine. He served in many capacities at the district and denomination level of The Brethren Church, and also on the Board of Trustees of Ashland University.

In addition to his wife Rosalie, he is survived by a son Glenn and his wife Marian (Stutzman); daughter Doris Grumbling and her husband Raymond (interim pastor of Johnstown Third); and daughter DeAnn Oburn and her husband Eugene, pastor of the Loree (Bunker Hill, Ind.) Brethren Church. He is also survived by two stepchildren and their spouses, 11 grandchildren, 5 step-grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and 7 step-great-grandchildren.

His funeral service was held January 4 at Hindman Funeral Home in Johnstown with Rev. Eugene Oburn and Rev. Ray Hileman officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to Johnstown Third Brethren Church. [†]



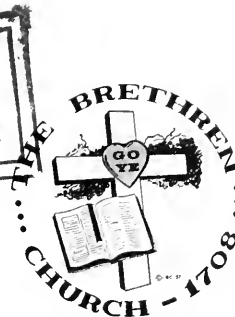
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Vol. 122, No. 3

A newsletter for Brethren people

March 2000

What would it take to be ready?

By Bonnie Munson

THERE is a Native American proverb that says, "Today is a good day to die." I have reflected on that for many years. The proverb implies that when I can make this statement with conviction and peace, I am ready. If I were to die today, I would have no regrets.

I have pondered many times what it means to have no regrets. What would it take to be ready? What would be left unfinished if I died today?

As Christians we are not only "awaiting" death, we are also waiting for the Lord's return. In 2 Peter chapter 3 we are told to watch and be ready until the Lord comes again. In verse 8 of this chapter Peter begins setting the stage, and then in verse 10 he says, "... the day of the Lord will come ..."! And in verse 14 he says, "... while you are waiting ...". It's in the waiting time that we have responsibility. What do we do while we wait?

Peter suggests two things: "strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish" (3:14); and "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (3:18).

Again I am caught with the admonition to be ready. Preparation is expected. Sitting around and doing nothing is not acceptable.

Marks of true Christians

Paul also prompts us to be doing several things. They are common and familiar to us. We read them and often hear them in sermons.

Romans 12:9-21 in the *New Revised Standard Version* has the heading "Marks of the True Chris-



tian." In this passage Paul says, "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; ... Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit ... Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

"Bless those who persecute you; ... Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; ... take thought for what is noble ..."

I have come to realize that there is a similar process in preparing for our own death. It begins when we acknowledge we are going to die someday. It prompts many questions. How shall I live until that day? What is the best use of my life until it's over? What are the most important things I need to do before that day comes?

One way to get a clearer sense of

what you need to be doing is to envision your funeral. Picture three speakers—one from your workplace, one from your church, and one from your family. All three recall their experiences with you and tell the others how they saw you live your life. What would you hope they would say? Did they see your intentions or your actions? Would anyone be surprised by what they heard?

Embracing our mortality

I have been very moved by a book entitled *Living with the End in Mind*, by Erin Tierney Kramp and Douglas H. Kramp with Emily P. McKhann. The subtitle says, *A Practical Checklist for Living Life to the Fullest by Embracing Your Mortality*.

Erin Kramp was diagnosed with terminal cancer in her early 30's. Her doctors told her that she had three to eighteen months to live. She had a very young daughter and a husband who was her best friend. The thought of the grief they would share when she was gone was very difficult for her to ponder.

(continued on next page)

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The *Women's Outlook Newsletter* is in the center of this issue.

What would it take to be ready?

(continued from page 1)

Erin began making video tapes for her daughter to play in the future with "advice from Mom in the teen years" or "thoughts from your Mom on your wedding day." As she began to envision her daughter's future, she realized there were many things that she could do now that would become gifts for her daughter and husband later on.

God allowed her four more years to live, and in that time she and her husband created a checklist of things to do before you die. To their surprise, it was not a morbid, sobering experience, but a life-affirming and joyous preparation.

The book presents many, many suggestions, but a few of them are worth sharing here.

Leave a legacy

- Prepare video or audio tapes sharing yourself and expressing your love for your family. Tell them family stories and remembrances. Make it joyful and loving so it brings a smile.
- Make photo albums and place in plastic sleeves in the albums audio tapes of you and others talking about the pictures. In the future, the tapes can be played while looking through the photos to enhance the experience.
- Write letters to others, to be read after you are gone, rejoicing in your relationship with them.
- Create Remember Books. Record things like earliest memories, favorite teacher, important life lessons, favorite leisure time activities, etc.
- Designate personal items to be given to individuals. Eliminate

their struggle to know who gets what from your estate.

Emotional preparation

- Accept that we are all going to die; we just don't know when.
- Tell the people you love how important they are to you.
- Remember that attitude is a choice; choose prayerfully.
- Forgive yourself and others; let go of the anger and hurt.
- Acknowledge your fears and talk about them.

Mental preparation

(Do these things to ease the burden on your family when you are gone.)

- Complete decisions about a will, power of attorney, insurance, etc.
- Develop a plan for all finances.
- Gather important documents into one place.
- Create a reference manual of all important information.
- Make sure your family knows what has been prepared and where to find it.

Spiritual preparation

- Strengthen your relationship with God while listening in the silence.
- Pray. Use your side of the conversation to express what's on your heart.
- Pray with others; draw strength from hearing each other's prayers.
- Read scripture and other spirit-lifting materials.
- Look for signs of God's love in your life.

The Kramps have gathered in this book wonderful suggestions for enjoyable and life-affirming activities to help us live life abundantly while acknowledging our mortality. They offer excellent suggestions for pre-

paring children for a death in the family. They've also prepared a list of things that need to be done when a death occurs—helpful at a time when it is hard to think. I have no doubt that their efforts in preparing this material will help many people.

Another author, Steven Levine, has asked some thought-provoking questions: "If you knew you were going to die soon and could only make one phone call, who would you call? What would you say? And why are you waiting?"*

These reflections have prompted me to get organized and to strengthen my relationships. I have been reminded of some of the important things I need to be doing while I wait. In sharing my thoughts here, I hope others will do the same. It takes time and effort and energy to pursue these preparations, but what will sustain us is remembering that this is a very loving thing to do.

When we have said what needed to be said,

When we have finished what needed to be finished,

When we have strengthened the bonds with those we love,

*Then, we will be at peace and say,
Today is a good day to die.*

Then, we can feel freedom.

Then, we can live with abundant JOY. [†]

Ms. Munson served for 25 years as a member of the Brethren House Ministries team. She now lives at Green-croft retirement community in Goshen, Ind., where she serves on the community's Ethics Committee, which frequently deals with end-of-life issues.

*Quoted from *A Second Helping of Chicken Soup for the Soul* by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hanson.

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Pontius' Puddle



Where does God need you?

By Emanuel W. Sandberg

IN THE FEBRUARY issue of the EVANGELIST (p. 3) I asked you to take a spiritual inventory of your life, I did this for several reasons.

First, I want each of us to remember that God gave **us** His Son so that we who believe in and follow Him will have everlasting life. Second, I want us to remember that God painstakingly created each one of us, developing as He did so a plan for our lives.

Third, I want us to realize that God has endowed each one of us with special talents and gifts and that He has enriched our lives with friends and worldly resources so that we can have the opportunity to live a full life. Fourth, I want us to realize that God expects us to live a life filled with loving relationships.

This list of God's gifts to us could go on and on. But I have established this base in order to ask you this: Since God has given you everything, what are you prepared to give back to Him?

The gifts you have received are not just for your personal development. They are intended to be used for the building up of the church and thus for the glory of God. Whenever a gift is not used to build up the church (and therefore is not used for God's glory), there is real danger that the gift will be wasted or misused for the glory of the person to whom it was given.

God has equipped us with specific gifts, and we need to ask Him how He wants us to use our gifts for the benefit of the church. The actual fact is that most of us do not know what our spiritual gifts are. If that is the case, how can we develop a

ministry appropriate to our gifts and dedicate that ministry in service to God to build up His church?

It seems clear to me that church leaders must do the following:

- Help all Christians to discover their spiritual gifts.
- Help Christians match their spiritual gifts with the tasks that need to be done to build God's church.
- Help those who have been given the gift of leadership to lead, regardless of whether they have an office or formal position of leadership.
- Help those whose gifts do not match their current assigned tasks to stop what they are doing and move as rapidly as possible into an appropriate ministry.

Pastors who lead by empowering others to utilize their spiritual gifts to build the church will find that God's energy within the congregation will be multiplied like a nuclear reaction.

We need to talk . . .
— God

I believe that if you want to serve God, you pray for God's guidance. You ask Him, "How can I serve you?" I believe that if you ask Him this question, He will answer you. And as a result, God's church

and your life will feel the power of His presence and guidance.

Are there things God needs from you? What role does He have for your life? I believe God wants us to:

- Develop and participate in a Global Program of Evangelism.
- Plant at least fifty new Brethren churches, including inner city and Hispanic churches.
- Involve **every** Brethren church as a sponsor or co-sponsor of a church plant.
- Expand the geographic spread of Brethren churches.

God wants each one of us to be a Great Commission activist (a warrior) and to use our minds, hearts, and God-given gifts to that end. He also wants us to develop our gifts and use them to:

- Participate in the **renewal of our churches.**
- Reach new levels of performance in accordance with the spiritual gifts and the resources He has provided.

Does the road you are on lead to My Place?

— God

I promise you, God has a vision for your life. In this new millennium we are being challenged to grow in our Christian beliefs and to set new standards for our support and service to God. Does God want our financial help? Yes! Does God want our time? Yes! Does God want us to develop and use our spiritual gifts? Yes! But even beyond money, time, and gifts, God wants us! He loves us!

As I said in the first issue of the EVANGELIST this year (January issue, p. 3), "We are blessed by God! We have a new chance; we have been given a renewed spirit; we are in a new day. Welcome to the transforming life of the new millennium!" So step up and claim your role as a **change agent** in our Brethren transformation! [✠]

Dr. Sandberg is Executive Director for The Brethren Church.

The Rescue

(The tale of a prodigal quilt)

By Beverly Summy

THIS IS THE TALE of a prodigal counterpane rescued from anonymity and restored to its historic position. The saga began when I read the following in the December 1999 *Reminisce Extra* magazine:

I have a patchwork quilt made in the mid-30's somewhere in Ohio. "S.S.M. Rev. & Mrs. Eppley 1936" is embroidered on it along with "Avonelle Wolford, Carl, Betty and H.P. Kliesch, Genevieve Wynkoop, Bertha Van Schoife."

I hope to return the quilt to the original community where it was made. It's in excellent condition.

— Bettie Focht King
24 Leon Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

The names Rev. & Mrs. Eppley leaped out at me, for I knew a Rev. Eppley when I was a girl in the Warsaw, Indiana, Brethren Church. Rev. Eppley was the pastor of the nearby Dutchtown Brethren Church. The Rev. Eppley I had known was a pleasant, one-armed pastor who drove the car that took my grandmother, Marie Becknell, and me to my first General Conference in Ashland, Ohio. The quilt also said S.S.M. on the Eppleys' patch. I wondered if that could stand for Sisterhood of Mary and Martha (S.M.M.), to which I had belonged in the 50s.

Some detective work

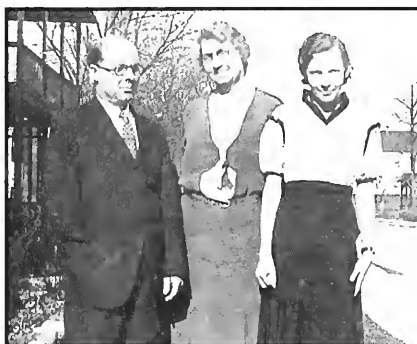
I said to myself, "Could this possibly be my Rev. Eppley?" So I began doing some detective work. Was Rev. Eppley somewhere in Ohio in 1936? My mother, Bonnie Summy, called Brad Weidenhamer, head librarian of Ashland Theological Seminary, to see if he had information on Rev. Eppley. Brad told us that Rev. Eppley was at the Williamstown, Ohio, Brethren Church from 1934-1937. Okay, that fit the picture.

Next I called Pauline Benshoff, as she and her husband, Rev. St. Clair Benshoff, had served the Williamstown Church during the 60s. I asked

her if she could identify any of the other names in the article as being people from Williamstown. She was not sure, but referred me to a sharp, 100-year-old lady at Williamstown, Miriam Swank, whom Pauline felt would know if the people were from that area.

Pay dirt

So I called Miriam and explained what I was tracking down. When I began mentioning the people named



Rev. Henry and Mary Eppley and their daughter Katherine in an undated photo.

on the quilt, she said, "Yes, yes, yes. I had that one in school (Miriam had been a teacher); yes, I know them all." I knew that I had hit pay dirt.

My last call of the day was to Mrs. King in Pittsburgh. She was flabbergasted when I told her that I had found the answer for her "prodigal

counterpane," as she called it, and had verified all the information.

Mrs. King said she thought that her father had won the quilt (actually a knotted comforter with crazy-quilt patches) in a raffle. The family lived near Ada, Ohio, at the time, a few miles north of Williamstown. She said her father had tried to refuse the quilt and leave it with those who had made it, but they said that he should take it since he had won it.

Mrs. King said that she would try to take the quilt to Williamstown, or else to Ashland Theological Seminary, where Pauline Benshoff had suggested it might reside. I checked with Brad Weidenhamer and he said he would be willing to accept it for the seminary archives. The next morning, however, Mrs. King called to ask if I would accept the quilt and get it to the proper place. I readily consented, and she shipped it to me.

A look at the quilt

When I opened the box and looked at the quilt, I was surprised to find it covered with patches with names in embroidered script style. There were so many names that we never deciphered all of them. I did search out the patch with "Rev. & Mrs. Eppley 1936" on it. It also said "S.M.M." (not S.S.M.), so my guess that it stood for Sisterhood of Mary and Martha was correct.

But my tale is not yet ended. I wrote to Rev. James Naff, current pastor of the Williamstown Church, to explain about the quilt and to ask if the church would like to have it. After consulting the official board, he

(continued at right)



The prodigal quilt with three of the women whose names are on it — (l. to r.) Mildred Wolford Hughes, Ruth Wolford Bowers, and Virginia Benson Launder. All three were girls when the quilt was made.

Photo by Williamstown Pastor James Naff

Announcing three General Conference speakers

Sally Morgenthaler

WORSHIP specialist Sally Morgenthaler will be the Tuesday evening speaker when Brethren gather for General Conference this August in Colorado. In addition to her Tuesday evening message, she will present a workshop on Wednesday morning.



Founder of Worship Evangelism Concepts, Morgenthaler now functions as on-site worship consultant for Denver Seminary. She is also Creative Design Director for Pathways Church, an urban Denver congregation committed to reaching the under-35 unchurched. Her book, *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers Into the*

Presence of God (Zondervan, 1995), has become a touchstone for post-modern, worship-driven ministry. She also writes the "Worship and Popular Culture" column for *Worship Leader* magazine.

Eduardo Rodriguez

The Wednesday evening service will feature a speaker from Argentina—Rev. Eduardo Rodriguez, pastor of the Colón Brethren Church, the largest Brethren church in Argentina. Many Brethren in the U.S. already know Rev. Rodriguez's son, also named Eduardo. The younger Rodriguez and his wife Mariela attended Ashland Theological Seminary and now head the South American Theological Seminary.

Worship at the Colón church is dynamic and Spirit-filled. U.S. Brethren will get a sample of that worship style, for the worship team from Rev. Rodriguez's church will accompany him to the United States and will lead the Wednesday evening worship service.

H.B. London, Jr.

Dr. H.B. London, Jr., Vice President of Ministry Outreach/Pastoral Ministries for Focus on the Family, will address the Brethren on Thursday evening. He will also lead a workshop on Friday morning.

Dr. London was a pastor for 31 years, most recently at the 3,200-member First Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena, Calif. He then accepted an invitation to become Assistant to the President for Focus



on the Family. His assignment—to serve as liaison to pastors and churches, a "pastor to pastors."

He communicates with hundreds of pastors and church leaders each week through "The Pastor's Weekly Briefing" (a fax network) and produces "Pastor to Pastor," a bi-monthly cassette and newsletter. He is also co-author of several books, among them *The Heart of a Great Pastor* and *Your Pastor is an Endangered Species*. [J]

called to say that the church would like to have it at least for a while, and perhaps later it would be given to the seminary. So on December 29, Rev. Naff picked up the quilt in Ashland and took it to Williamstown, where he said it would be displayed.

I still had a little more follow up to do. My parents and I had also known the Eppleys' only child, Katherine. She married Leonard

Mauzy and they lived in the Warsaw area when we did. Later they moved to Arkansas. To find out where she was now, I enlisted the help of my childhood friend, Bonnie Lou Scott Hughes, who still lives in the Warsaw area. She learned that Katherine had moved back to Warsaw in 1990 after the death of her husband. Then on September 24, 1999, she died.

Below is a portion of a letter Beverly Summy received from the Williamstown congregation:

The members of the First Brethren Church at Williamstown are so grateful to you for responding to the ad in the *Reminisce Extra* magazine.

I was nine years old according to the date on the quilt. I do not remember the quilt; however many of the materials used in making the quilt bring back fond memories of aprons, pajamas,

dresses, etc., worn by members of my family. All of my family's names appear on that quilt as well as many relatives. I know or have known many of the names that are on the quilt.

I remember Rev. Eppley well. He baptized me in the year of 1937. If I remember correctly he was attending Ashland College or Seminary at that time. I remember him as a guest in our home, as an overnight guest, and he ate many meals at our table.

— Ruth Bowers, Secretary

Bonnie Lou was able to give me the phone number of Terry Mauzy, Katherine and Leonard's son. So I called him and told him about the quilt with his grandparents' names on it. He was interested to know about the quilt and was happy to learn it was at Williamstown and would possibly go to the seminary.

One final note: I entitled this article "The Rescue." The reason for this is that when I made my first call to Mrs. King about the quilt, she said that she was looking at the quilt sitting in a black garbage bag. Before receiving my call, she had decided that in a day or two she would take it to Goodwill! [J]

Ms. Summy is a member of the Ashland Park Street Brethren Church. Beginning in 1958, she worked for 20 years first in the Brethren Youth Office, then for the Board of Christian Education, and finally for the Benevolent Board of The Brethren Church.

A visit to the Brethren in Latin America

By Reilly R. Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries

LAST OCTOBER my wife Cindy and I traveled to Latin America and spent four days in each Mexico City, Mexico; Medellín, Colombia; and Lima, Peru. We went to encourage our missionaries, to see the progress of their work, and to share the gospel. Cindy blessed the sisters by going with me. The Brethren in Latin America thanked her over and over for coming to visit them.

Mexico City

While we were in Mexico City, the Brethren held their General Conference, with nearly 300 people in attendance. Conference in Mexico is different from Conference in the United States. The meeting consists of a worship celebration and is held outdoors at a resort. The resort also offers opportunities to swim, play basketball or volleyball, hike, or just to enjoy the company of one another in the open-air pavilion. Elections are not held at the Conference, but in the local congregations. Representatives meet together to organize themselves at another time.

The work in Mexico City is pro-

gressing steadily, though slowly. The three Brethren pastors each serve two congregations. Brethren missionaries Todd and Tracy Ruggles lead the Jesus del Monte and Cinco de Mayo congregations. Todd is also training leaders for the Mexican church using theological education by extension courses. Six people completed the most recent class.

Tracy teaches Sunday school and trains new teachers by mentoring them as she teaches. When a newly-trained teacher replaces her in one class, she moves on to another. During our visit, Tracy was expecting their first child (*born in January; see page 9*). Even though she was pregnant at the time, she worked like everyone else. She's like the Energizer Bunny. She just keeps going.

Jennifer Thomas works with Todd and Tracy. She is developing youth ministries in the Jesus del Monte and Cinco de Mayo churches and is helping the other Brethren churches in Mexico City start youth ministries as well. After each congregation has a youth ministry, Jennifer will organize a cooperative

"national" youth ministry that will include the youth and leaders from all of the churches. Her goals are to evangelize and disciple young people and to train adult youth leaders. She is also studying theological education by extension courses.

Pastor Moisés Calderón and his wife Patty lead the Chamapa church, which is both the newest and fastest-growing congregation. About 60 people attend each Sunday. Pastor Calderón also leads the Palo Solo congregation, the oldest Brethren church in Mexico City. Pastor Samuel García and his wife Creencia likewise lead two congregations—located in the Bonfil and Totolinga neighborhoods. The Mexican Brethren also support one couple in seminary.

Medellín, Colombia

In Colombia, missionaries Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri are providing great leadership. The church they pastor in the Ferrara neighborhood is bursting at the seams. Some of the people stand outside during worship services, since the building cannot hold all of them.

Marcelo is training eight leaders to preach and teach in his absence. They are also learning to open new Bible studies and small groups near their homes. Marcelo plans to use these groups eventually to start new churches in nearby neighborhoods. In addition, Marcelo oversees the Campo Valdes Church, which meets on the other side of Medellín. This church has had a troubled past, but Marcelo's leadership has brought stability and peace.

Adriana has trained an outstanding worship team at the Ferrara Church. It includes two keyboards, electronic drums, guitars, and four or five voices. In addition, Adriana teaches Sunday school and trains new teachers, and she is also training leaders for the women's ministries in the church. Cindy spoke to the women's groups during our visit.

Besides preaching at the Ferrara and Campo Valdes churches while in Medellín, I also worked with Marcelo on some administrative details. The most important issue was development of a contingency plan for the ministry in case Marcelo and Adriana

(cont. on page 7—after the Outlook pages)



The General Conference of The Brethren Church in Mexico is a time for worship, fellowship, and recreation. The worship celebration is held in an outdoor pavilion.

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



March-April 2000

Volume 13, Number 4

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

This morning, as I look out of my window, I can't help praising the Lord for the beautiful new day He has given us. By the time you read this, spring should be on its way!

Today it is very cold, but the sun is bright and makes the snow sparkle like diamonds. We have had a couple of snow storms which left our part of the country resting under a magnificent blanket of white. The sky is a deep blue and the shadows on the snow are long.

All this reminds me again of the miracles of God's creation, how He provides all things good for us and gives us a deep sense of His unfailing love.

Although Christmas is past, I want to share with you some of our blessings. (You may remember that, in the last *Newsletter*, I said we were anticipating the arrival of David and his family from Chisinau, Moldova, in time for Christmas.)

Dave, Sheri, their boys, and Little Lady (their toy poodle) made all their connections from Chisinau and arrived a little "early" in South Bend. In spite of numerous airports, only one piece of luggage was missing, but it caught up with them the next day. This was all an answer to many prayers on their behalf!

We actually celebrated Christmas
(continued on page 2)

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

I Am Accepted in Christ

John 1:12
John 15:15
Romans 5:1
I Corinthians 6:17

I am God's child
I am Christ's friend
I have been justified
I am united with the Lord and one with Him in spirit

I Corinthians 6:20
I Corinthians 12:27
Ephesians 1:1
Ephesians 1:5
Ephesians 2:18
Colossians 1:14
Colossians 2:10

I have been bought with a price; I belong to God
I am a member of Christ's Body
I am a saint
I have been adopted as God's child
I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit
I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins
I am complete in Christ

I Am Secure in Christ

Romans 8:1, 2
Romans 8:28
Romans 8:33, 34
Romans 8:35
II Corinthians 1:21
Colossians 3:3
Philippians 1:6

I am free forever from condemnation
I am assured that all things work together for good
I am free from any condemning charges against me
I cannot be separated from the love of God
I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God
I am hidden with Christ in God
I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected
I am a citizen of heaven
I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind
I can find grace and mercy in time of need
I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me

Philippians 3:20
II Timothy 1:7

Hebrews 4:16
I John 5:18

I Am Significant in Christ

Matthew 5:13, 14
John 15:1, 5
John 15:16
Acts 1:8
I Corinthians 3:16
II Corinthians 5:17-20
II Corinthians 6:1
Ephesians 2:6
Ephesians 2:10
Ephesians 3:12
Philippians 4:13

I am the salt and light of the earth
I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit
I am a personal witness of Christ
I am God's temple
I am a minister of reconciliation
I am God's coworker
I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm
I am God's workmanship
I may approach God with freedom and confidence
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me

— From *Living Free in Christ* by Neil Anderson, 1993, Regal Books, Ventura, CA 93003. Used by Permission.

Missionary Miscellany

A special welcome is given to Johnathan Charles Ruggles, the newest missionary in The Brethren Church! Johnathan arrived January 11 at 9:02 a.m. in Mexico City, the son of Todd and Tracy, with whom we have prayed for several months. We are thankful for Johnathan's safe and healthy arrival.

Todd wrote: "We left the house just as rush hour traffic was starting. It was a Tuesday morning, the one day of the week that we cannot drive the van. (There are restrictions on vehicle circulation because of the pollution, and Tuesday we can't drive. The day is determined by the last digit of the license plate.) However, we prayed that the police wouldn't stop us (in an emergency such as this the police might have helped clear the way to the hospital or they might have argued with us).

We made it to the hospital in only 25 minutes and passed only two patrol cars, neither of which saw us. On a normal day we might have passed at least ten patrol cars in that stretch! God escorted us!

"Johnathan weighed 7 pounds, 6½ ounces, and measured 20 inches. The name Johnathan means "God has given" and Charles means "a man."

"Thank you all for your prayers, your gifts, and your support during this time. We look forward to seeing you all this summer. God bless you and thanks again."

Earlier Tracy wrote of the expanded youth program since Jennifer Thomas has joined them. Jennifer's previous experiences with Spearhead, combined with the gifts and talents God has given her, have equipped her for the youth, the church planting, and the leadership developing ministry envisioned by the Mexican Brethren Church.

Tracy continued, "The Jesus del Monte mission hosted the second denominational *velada* in September. A *velada* is a prayer vigil. They worshiped God, prayed, and had fellowship together from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. The Palo Solo Church and all the missions were invited. At least

130 people attended. It is so encouraging to see God uniting the denomination and all our Brethren in these ways. God has been bringing growth to the churches and opening our eyes to the importance of corporate prayer for the extension of His kingdom. Also, more and more people have been getting excited about praying and interceding for others."

Missionaries-of-the-Month for March are **Miguel and Sonia Antunez** in Lima, Peru, and **Jerry and Linda Barr** at the Gateway Brethren Fellowship in Hagerstown.

The April Missionaries-of-the-Month are **Juan and Amelia Arregin**, pastoring the Iglesia de los Hermanos in Tucson; **Juan Carlos and María Miranda** in Pasadena; and **Italo and Rebecca Abuid** at the Iglesia de los Hermanos in Sarasota. Do you notice the Hispanic emphasis this month?

On January 7 the Mirandas began their second cell group in La Puente, 35 minutes from their home in Pasadena. Fifteen adults and children attended! Juan Carlos offers praises and asks for prayer!

The Arregins rejoice that ten recently accepted Christ as their Savior.

Let me introduce Italo (e-ta-lo) and Rebecca Abuid (a-bu-eed). Italo is from Peru and Rebecca is the daughter of former South American missionaries Rob and Jane Byler. On January 1 Italo became the pastor of the Spanish-speaking congregation in Sarasota, following the resignation of Daniel and Kathy Rosales. Daniel began a full-time evangelism and radio ministry in Mexico and South America.

Expand your prayers to keep Daniel and Kathy Rosales as you add Italo and Rebecca.

Please continue to pray for **Nancy Hostetler** and her family due to the death of Doran—husband, father, and administrator of Riverside Christian School. Doran died of an apparent heart attack January 25. The memorial service was January 28 at Riverside School.

In addition, pray for the school teachers, students, and the community. Doran was an outstanding influence in the lives of many hundreds of people, as well as in the education, evangelism, and economic growth of southeastern Kentucky.



The President's Pen (continued)

a day late, on Sunday, and what a blessing it was for the whole family—kids, grand kids, and grand dogs—to be together! All too soon it was time to go our separate ways and get back to normal routines.

Dave and Sheri made the move to Anderson, South Carolina, where they will be located during their furlough. Davey and Jonathan are attending a Christian school and are adjusting well.

"Little" Davey is now 15, is taller than his dad, and is playing center on his school's basketball team. Jonathan turned 7 and enjoys school. He has decided that sounding out words doesn't "hurt his brain" after all!

Sheri is enrolled in classes at a local college, and Dave is attending seminars at Mid-America Baptist (continued on page 3)

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

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Ashland, Ohio 44805

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Women's Outlook Newsletter

In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

Psalm 115:15

Alma J. Lewis, a member and deaconess of the Brush Valley Brethren Church, went home to be with her Lord September 29, 1999. Affectionately called "Mommy Mom," she spent all her life serving God in all programs of the church, especially those involving children.

Her spirit lives on, both with God and in our hearts, as we remember her regular Tuesday prayer that always ended: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28, *KJV*).

These ladies were remembered during the Memorial Service at the 1999 General Conference:

FLORIDA

Sarasota Jean Stauffer

SOUTHEASTERN

Oak Hill Jean Lively

MIDWEST

Mulvane Edna McLendon
Irene Pray

CENTRAL

Hammond Ave. Mary Amos
Milledgeville Caroline Miller
Ruth Miller
Margaret Graehling
Alberta Wilkinson

INDIANA

Tiosa Catherine Lewis
North Manchester Hadassah
Vera Overly
Loree Marie Waters
Cora Graf
Bryan I Dorothy Cox
Nappanee Norma Geyer
Meadow Crest May Snyder
College Corner Florence Roby
Burlington Edith Rodkey

OHIO

Garber Florence Rose
Gretna Gleaners Helen Skeen
Ashland Park St. Faith
Alberta Holsinger
New Lebanon Helen Bowser
Enid Schrader

PENNSYLVANIA

Pleasant View Grace Rosensteel
Berlin Ida Kimmel
Highland Mabel Ross
Vinc Helen Mackall
Masontown Pearle Jordan
Valley Elsie Stahl

CALIFORNIA

South Pasadena
Marguerite Bowman

As the ladies from the Garber Brethren Church filled a mug with Hershey's chocolate hugs and kisses, the lives of these sisters were remembered with love and joy and thankfulness.

The President's Pen *(continued)*

Seminary in Memphis, working on his doctoral program.

It's great to have them in the States, although we wish they were closer. They assure us that, with all the deputation they will be doing, there will be many occasions when Grandma and Grandpa Rowser will need to "baby sit." Hopefully that time will be after all the ice and snow.

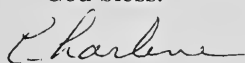
One of the advantages of retirement is that we are freer to help out when the kids have needed us. Recently Tracy called with a big "I Need Help!" Jeff was involved in all-day classes for a week at the Seminary, and Tracy was taking mid-term exams plus meeting with her counseling clients.

Our schedule for that week was light, so we were able to go to Ohio and help in their time of need. We had an added bonus when a snow storm hit the Columbus area and we postponed our trip home for another day. It felt really good to be needed!

Being needed. Lately that is a subject I have thought about a great deal. It may very likely be something I will write about soon.

I am thankful for the safe journey the Lord gave us into the new year, the new century, and the new millennium. My prayer for each of you is that He will continue to surround you with His love and that you will feel His presence with you daily.

God bless.


Charlene

LOOK!

SEE THIS

You have passed the mid-point of the year and you should check progress on your commitments. Traditionally we have met most often the commitments of (1) nurturing your faith through regular daily prayer, Bible reading, and Christian literature and (2) supporting the mission of the church worldwide financially. Fine; we still have work to do!

Refer to the Commitments on page 46 of your *Devotional Guide* and review No. 1 and No. 2. Now see No. 3: Through social outreach, promote . . . (that means you have to look!).

Various forms of missionary encouragement are always appreciated. And offerings to Christian relief organizations, such as World Relief, World Vision, and the Salvation Army, enable them to do the work where we can't. Offerings are the feet to our prayers.

You know that General Conference will be in Estes Park, Colorado, August 7-11. The schedule will be varied, different, and wonderful. Yet some things will be the same and also wonderful.

W.M.S. project and thank offerings will be received as usual.

The two-year project spans two continents: funds to purchase a store front for worship in Malaysia, where David and Jenny Loi serve (May Missionaries-of-the-Month), and funds to enlarge the church building in Peru, where Miguel and Sonia Antunez serve (March Missionaries-of-the-Month).

Your thank offerings are designated for benevolences: Ashland Theological Seminary, World and Home Missions, Riverside Christian School, Campus Ministry, and a Scholarship at Ashland University.

Consider electing your officers this spring. Traditionally, May is a special meeting with mothers and daughters and June is sometimes a vacation month for many.

Nancy Hunn, general secretary, needs the names and addresses of the officers (re-elected or new) by the end of June. List them on the statistical report, please.

District Doings



Betty Deardurff, OHIO district secretary, wrote about the Women's Fall Retreat.

Thirty-three women from all over Ohio met together at Camp Bethany on October 15-16, 1999. The foliage was beautiful and the weather was inviting for the annual women's retreat. It was good to renew old friendships and make new friends.

Best of all was the time of inspiration and sharing with Marilyn Aspinall, former missionary to Argentina. Now Marilyn's husband, Ray, is pastor in Bryan, Ohio, and her role as pastor's wife is very similar to that in Argentina.

Marilyn's theme was "Prayer." In three sessions with the Bible, she shared answered prayers, problems, and prayers in her personal life. She challenged each lady to a deeper prayer life.

Nancy Jo Beatty from Gretna gave a very meaningful message in song.

Congratulations!

At the fun time Friday evening, Joann Kroft was given a small gift for being present at all but two of the retreats since the 1970s.

Other activities from the OHIO District include:

Ashland Park St. Faith: In addition to the monthly devotional topic, special speakers were Willy and Angela Brandle, missionaries to Angola, Africa, and Chris Rufener, who spoke about the Christian discipling group of Navigators, with which he works at the University of California. For benevolences, the ladies donated two SHARE food

packages each month to Seminary families; gave items for Griffith Nursing Home in Ashland; purchased a blood pressure cuff for Tracy Ruggles to use in Mexico; and sent consumable items to the Riverside School. Financial gifts are given regularly to Maria Miranda's radio ministry, youth, Navigators, missions, and the district project. Some from the society give practical hands-on experiences by helping in the Salvation Army program and at the Senior Center.

North Georgetown Carrie Stoffer Society: Sent baby clothes to the Ruggles and birthday items to Jennifer Thomas in Mexico City; and collected items for the Christmas bags for the Haven of Rest in Akron. President Alice Kensinger stated, "It is such a pleasure to serve our precious Savior and also to get together for study and fellowship."

Williamstown: Had an auction for World Relief; sent Christmas toys, clothing, coupons, and other items to Riverside School; had Secret Pals with youth.

Brethren Bible: Financially supported Jennifer Thomas in Mexico City.

New Lebanon Evening: Sent birthday cards to the missionaries and their families; financially supported the Christian radio station WFCJ and the Women's Crisis Center.

New Lebanon Afternoon: Financially supported the faculty at the Riverside School in Lost Creek; collected clothes and labels.

The Faith, Hope, and Joy Circles at Ashland Park St. presented Doris Shultz in a piano recital Sunday evening, February 6. People are always thrilled to hear Doris play favorites, such as "How Great Thou Art," "It is Well with My Soul," and "Great is Thy Faithfulness." An offering was received for the Theological Seminary and a reception followed.

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Susan Kidd, former Southeastern district president, used "Who I Am in Christ" with her president's message at a district conference. I appreciate Susan's sharing it with me and Regal Books publishers graciously gave permission to share it with you. May I suggest that you read and meditate on one reference each day. On Sundays read two verses to complete the month.

To extend the list of "I Am in Christ," think of how you serve God. Perhaps you can say "I am a pray-er" (II Chron. 7:14); "I am a doer" (Phil. 4:13; James 1:22); "I am a server" (Ps. 100:2, *KJV*); "I am an encourager" (Prov. 12:25; Philemon 1:7); "I am a care giver" (I Thess. 2:6-8; I Tim. 5:4); "I am a friend" (Prov. 17:17).

Whatever you are, do it for the glory of God!

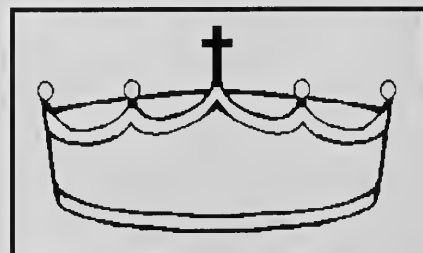
During the Lenten season, much emphasis is given to the cross. When we sing the words of a favorite hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross," we sing "I will cling to the old rugged cross."

Cling only long enough to confess your sins (jealousy, self-pity, resentment, bad temper, etc.) to Jesus, Who died on the cross for our sins. Then look beyond the cross and the empty tomb. Christ is neither on the cross nor in the tomb, but He lives! And, as Jesus promised His disciples, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Alleluia!

Your friend,

Joan

Joan





The Ferrara congregation, one of two Brethren churches in Medellin, fills its building to overflowing. The church is led by missionary pastor Marcelo Ferreri (at far rt.).

would need to leave the country in an emergency. Colombia is still a very dangerous country for foreigners.

Lima, Peru

In Lima, we found another growing church. Some of the walls in the church building were removed to increase seating capacity from 40 to 65. Even so, there is still not enough space. The 1999 Growth Partners offering of approximately \$21,500 will be used to build a second-story worship center seating approximately 150. Pastor Miguel Antunez hopes to begin construction early this spring. In addition to the capacity crowds for worship on Sundays, nearly 40 young people faithfully attend youth meetings every Friday evening.

(cont. above, 3rd column)



Adding a second-story worship center to the Lima, Peru, Brethren Church building will provide much-needed space for the overcrowded worship services.

The times of our lives in Mexico City

By Brethren Missionary Todd Ruggles

I HAVE frequently been asked, "What's it like serving in Mexico?" That's a tough question to answer. How can I describe the past seven years of our lives to someone who has never lived in Mexico?

There have been painful and dark times, as when Tracy and I lost our first baby after several years of trying to have a child; and when Tracy's dad, her brother-in-law, and my grandmother all died in 1998.

There have been lonely times, as when fellow missionaries Tim and Jan Eagle left Mexico, as well as each time we are separated from family again. There have also been stressful and tiring times, such as the past one and a half years, during which we have tried to care for the needs of two congregations that are an hour's drive apart.

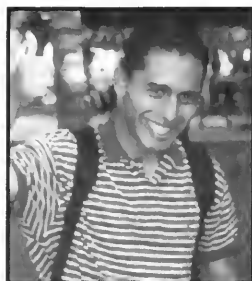
On the other hand, we have had some very rewarding times, as when

one of the people we are discipling says or does something to show that he or she really is maturing in the Lord. There are times when we marvel at how God works, such as a few days ago when a new couple in the Jesus del Monte Mission told me that they would like to buy the church a sound system. I had been praying for this, but felt that the time was not yet right to approach the mission about it.

There have been times when we have been very blessed by our brethren here, as when the women of the church pooled their very limited resources and bought us a crib as a baby shower present. There are

(continued on next page)

times when we are so thankful to the Lord that words can not fully express our gratitude. Such a time occurred just a couple of weeks ago when Manuel, a young man from the Jesús del Monte Mis-



Manuel (above) and the car (rt.) from which he and two friends miraculously escaped.



sion, and two of his friends were miraculously spared in a very serious car accident. The car was travelling at about 75 m.p.h. when it left the road and hit a wall head on.

And there are times when our hearts are filled with great joy, as when someone we have been witnessing to and praying for accepts the Lord; or when our son Johnathan was born.

No, I cannot adequately share with you in a short article what life is like in Mexico, but I can tell you that living and serving here has been



Todd and Tracy Ruggles with their son Johnathan, born January 11, 2000.

worth it. Despite our homesickness, our separation from family and good friends, the trials and the frustrations we've experienced, it has been worth it. It is worth it because we know that God is using us where we are to work His perfect will in His way. And there is nothing better than that. [✠]

Twenty-five years of ministry in Malaysia

By Brethren Missionary Jenny Loi

HOW TIME FLIES! It does not seem so long ago that David graduated from Ashland Theological Seminary and we started the mission work in Penang. But it has now been 25 years. The Lord has blessed us during these years, though we have had ups and downs in this ministry.

We started the mission work from scratch. Church growth has been slow, but the Penang Brethren Church now has a worship center of its own. Praise the Lord that the congregation was able to settle all the bank loans by December 1999. We hope that the Penang Brethren Church will be independent in the very near future.

In Johor Bahru, where we are now working, we have had to move our meeting location a couple of times because the landlords wanted their buildings back. We lost members as a result of the moves. Some of them joined other churches near their areas. After each move we have had to start again from

scratch. Our present church members joined us only recently. David baptized most of them in the past couple of years.

On December 25, 1999, Brother Ng See Wei was baptized and received into the church. His parents and one brother were baptized on Christmas day two years ago. His other brother and his sister have yet to make a decision to be baptized. Please remember them in your prayers. The following day, December 26, David baptized another person, Sister Liew Mong Yong.

We have a prayer meeting every Wednesday at 8 p.m. Seven to nine people attend. Pray that more people will get involved in this prayer meeting.

The "Happy" Kindergarten teachers approached David about starting a Happy Children Day on Saturday mornings. They suggested starting it right after the Chinese New Year holiday. (*Chinese New Year's Day was February 5.*) David will serve as advisor to the Happy Chil-

dren Day. We will get the Brethren youth involved in telling Bible stories and helping in other ways. We sow seeds with these children in hopes that when they are older, they will come to our youth fellowship. Our Saturday afternoon children's church school continues as usual. We may integrate it with the Happy kindergarten kids in the future.

Our son Steve plans to organize a music club on Friday evenings. The meetings will be informal, having to do mainly with music and playing different musical instruments. We hope to attract more young people who will come into contact with the gospel this way. Saturday evening youth meetings will continue in a more formal way.

We plan to purchase a worship center in Johor Bahru in a couple of years. The Brighton Chapel Brethren Church has already donated \$2,000 toward our church-building fund. If ten churches each pledged \$2,000 toward this fund, we would be able to make a down payment on the building. Since July 1999 the Johor Bahru Church has raised \$2,600. We hope and pray that this building will materialize in two to three years. We urge you, dear Brethren, to support our building fund for a worship center. May God reward you in His kingdom. [✠]

Experiencing God's Faithfulness in India

By Brethren Missionary K. Prasanth Kumar

OUR DEAR BRETHERN, great is God's faithfulness to bring us into the new millennium without Y2K computer problems!

Here in India, the brutal killing last year of the Steins, missionaries from Australia, was followed by anti-Christian activities against missionaries and believers. Despite these hurdles, the Lord has blessed every seed of the Gospel we have sown in the idolatrous hearts of the people, and we have reaped a good harvest of 500 souls since July of last year. This brings the total number of baptized members of Brethren Mission in India to 7,448.

We deeply praise the Lord's name as 1999 marked the completion of 30 glorious years of our ministry in India. This ministry has resulted in four city churches, 300 preaching points, and 250 trained pastors. Training facilities include the Bible Institute, four sewing schools (where 120 needy women receive training

every year), and two job technique training schools (for unemployed young people). Other ministries include our two orphanages, a clinic, mobile medical units, a Literature Centre (reading room), and *Suvarthikudu* (the equivalent in India to THE BRETHERN EVANGELIST).

The Brethren Prayer Tower, where prayer warriors intercede around the clock, is the power generator of our ministry. All-night fasting and prayer sessions on Friday nights brought hundreds of perishing souls to Christ's fold.

Every Sunday the worship service at our church in Rajahmundry has a good attendance of 700 strong believers. The present

church building, which was built 25 years ago, is now too small, since it has a capacity of only 400 people and we squeeze 500 people in! We strongly feel a dire need for expansion. The church building is also used as the Bible Institute, where we have trained around 500 pastors so far. We urge you to kindly uphold us in your prayers in this regard.

"Go" or "Send" is the Lord's command. Currently 250 trained Indian pastors are doing evangelistic work at 300 preaching points. But only 50 of these pastors have sponsors. These pastors take Jesus to the perishing in many unreached villages. Sponsor a pastor for \$35 a month, and he will present the Gospel to the unsaved on your behalf. (Contact

Ginny Hoyt at the National Office for more information.)

May our Lord richly bless you. [✠]



The Brethren Prayer Tower—power generator for Brethren Mission in India.

Brethren Mission aids Indian cyclone victims

ON October 29, 1999, a "super cyclone" hit Orissa State in India, doing tremendous damage to the area. Orissa State is just north of Andhra Pradesh, the state in which Brethren Mission in India is located.

From November 14 to 19, Brethren missionary Dr. K. Prasanth Kumar led a team from Brethren Mission to the afflicted area to survey the damage and to plan relief efforts. They found the damage in the cyclone-ravaged area to be unimaginable.

An estimated 50,000 people were killed, as well as thousands of animals. Entire villages were swept away. Crops were destroyed, trees uprooted, bridges and roads washed out, and electric

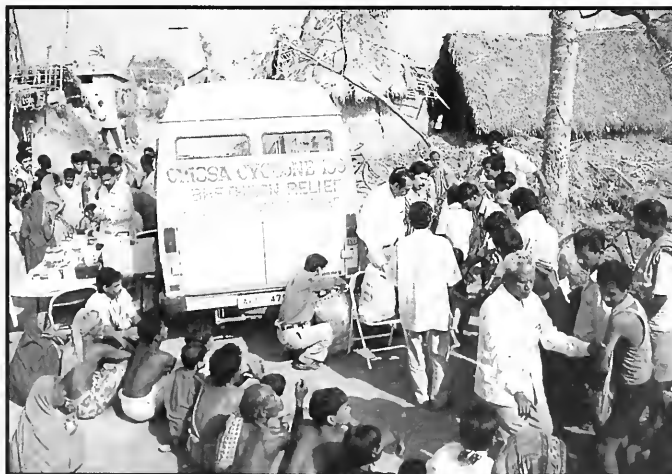
power disrupted. There was no food, no drinking water, and little clothing or shelter. And because of the fouled water and unsanitary conditions, disease was reaching epidemic proportions.

Rev. Kumar and his team identified

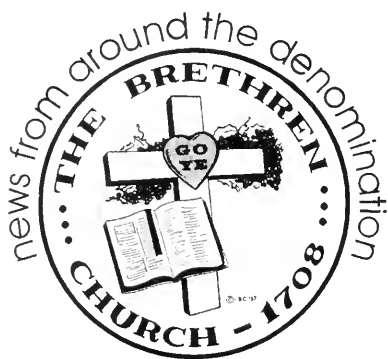
21 villages that were worst affected and needed immediate help. They returned to Brethren Mission headquarters in Rajahmundry to begin making preparations for relief work.

On November 30 Dr. Kumar and his team set out again for the cyclone-affected area, laden with food and medicines for the cyclone victims. On this trip they visited five villages, where they provided food packets and medicine to more than 1,500 victims of the cyclone. On January 2, they made yet another trip to Orissa State, this time taking clothing, cooking utensils, health and hygiene materials, books for students, and other needed items.

The relief efforts of Brethren Mission in India were made possible in large part by a \$20,000 grant from World Relief. [✠]



Brethren Mission relief workers give food and medicine to cyclone victims in the village of Nimol.



Briefly Noted



The Milledgeville, Ill., Brethren Church began a ministry in January called **Prayer 2000**. This is a ministry in which **every** person (member or friend) who attends the church is prayed for **every single day**. Members and regular attenders who expressed a desire to pray for their brothers and sisters in church were given a list of people for whom they were to pray every day. These lists taken together included the names of every member and person who regularly attends the church.

An announcement about **Prayer 2000** in the January issue of the Milledgeville Church newsletter, *The Brethren Monitor*, said, "So, beginning January 1, 2000, know that someone will be praying for you! Watch for change in attitudes, healings, miracles, blessings, etc.!"

Perhaps this is a ministry other Brethren churches should also try.

In Memory

Rev. Harold R. Garland, 84, former Brethren and Baptist pastor, died in Dayton, Ohio, on January 4. He served the Cumberland, Vandergrift, Oak Hill, Valley, and Mt. Pleasant Brethren churches in the 40s, and the West Alexandria, Ohio, Brethren Church from 1948 to 1951 and again from 1953 to 1959. After a brief return to the Cumberland, Md., Brethren Church, he left the denomination. He is survived by his wife Mildred of 62 years, four daughters and one son, 18 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandson.

Grumblings honored on appreciation day at Johnstown Second Brethren Church

Johnstown, Pa. — Members of the Johnstown Second Brethren Church showed their appreciation Sunday, October 24, to their pastor, Rev. Glenn Grumbling. The surprise event followed the morning worship service and included a carry-in meal.

Pastor Grumbling was presented a monetary gift, and the W.M.S. gave his wife Nancy an eat-out certificate for two. Following the meal, the Brethren gathered around the piano for a hymn sing. It was an enjoyable time for all.

In December, Rev. Grumbling completed 45 years in pastoral ministry. Born and raised in Johnstown, he became a member of Johnstown Third Brethren Church. He began pastoral ministry at the United Church of North Fairfield in December 1954 while at Ashland College. He and Nancy were married that same month.

A 1958 graduate of Ashland Theological Seminary, he served Brethren churches in Milford, Wabash (College Corner, twice), and Muncie, Ind.; Waterloo, Iowa; and Georgetown (Mt. Olivet), Del.; before coming to the Johnstown Second Church.



Pastor Glenn and Nancy Grumbling enjoying the Pastor Appreciation carry-in meal.

The Grumblings were parents of four children. Son Wayne is a pastor in the Church of the Brethren. Another son, Thomas, serves on the core team of Oasis, a new Brethren church in the Phoenix, Ariz., area. Daughter Cheryl (Mrs. John Black) lives in Hickory, N.C., where she and her family are active in an independent church. Another daughter, Rebecca, went to be with the Lord in 1990. Her former husband, Jesus Muñoz, pastors a Hispanic Grace Brethren Church in Valrico, Fla.

— reported by Bertha Boyer

Impact Through Prayer

THE SEASON OF LENT* provides us various opportunities to grow in our relationship with God. Whether we choose to give up sweets, practice 40 days of prayer and fasting (Matt 6:16-18), or simply devote 30 minutes daily to God in prayer (1 Thess 5:17), we should prayerfully consider how to make more room in our lives for Christ.

If we fast, let us do so in remembrance of His life, offered as a ransom on our behalf. Let us consider His un-failing love for all humanity and His humble obedience to the Father. (*Note: please consult a physician before fasting.*)

If we commit to more time in prayer, let us do so joyfully, patiently, and

*Lent is the 40-day period (excluding Sundays) from Ash Wednesday (March 8 this year) to Easter.

faithfully. A friend recently made a suggestion for those who have difficulty with extended prayer times. Find a quiet place. With Bible in hand, simply say, "I am here, Lord," then proceed to read the Bible. It is often through Scripture that God meets us in significant and revelatory ways.

The specific action we choose is not so critical as is the desire from which the action flows. This is the desire our Creator God has placed in our hearts to know Him through a personal relationship with His Son, Christ Jesus.

The intentional action that originates from this desire and that is devoted to drawing us closer to Jesus will help us to see His personal involvement in our lives. It will foster an awareness of His love for us and for others, and ultimately bring glory to God.

— Karen Frado

Appreciation Day for Pastor Owen Preston blesses both pastor and the Berlin Brethren

Berlin, Pa. — Sunday, October 31, was Pastor Appreciation Day at the Berlin Brethren Church, a day to express appreciation for the ministry of Pastor Owen Preston.

Pastor Appreciation Day began with a continental breakfast for Pastor Preston and members and friends of the church. The Brethren had a large assortment of doughnuts to choose from, thanks to the fact that one of the members is an employee of Dunkin' Donuts.®

During the morning worship service, testimonies of appreciation for Pastor Preston's ministry were given by Amanda Faidley, representing the youth, by Edith Hoffman on behalf of the Diaconate, and by Rev. Robert L. Hoffman speaking for the adults. A beautifully-decorated basket containing cards of appreciation from the congregation was presented to the Prestons, along with dress shirts for the pastor.

Rev. Preston became interim pastor of the Berlin Church in October 1998 and then, after six months, became full pastor of the church in April of last year. He came to the church at a difficult time in the life of the congregation, after it had unwittingly given birth to another



Berlin Pastor Owen Preston looks over the wide selection of donuts at the Pastor Appreciation Day continental breakfast.

Brethren group in Berlin. During his ministry he has brought healing and stability to the church.

Ordained in 1958 in the Church of the Brethren, Rev. Preston is in his 42nd year of pastoral ministry. He served Church of the Brethren congregations in West Virginia, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and

will now include seminary faculty and staff as well as some pastors from the community.

The move to weekly chapel services reflects the ongoing commitment of Dr. G. William Benz, president of the university, Dr. Emanuel Sandberg, chairman of the Board of Trustees, other trustees, and the administration of the university, as well as the staff of the department of Religious Life to the advancement of the Christian faith and Christian values on the university campus.

Another past tradition to be revived this year will be the annual Spiritual Enrichment Week. This event, to be held April 16–20, has its roots in similar events that were held on campus in the 50s and 60s.

Featured during this year's Spiritual Enrichment Week will be internationally-known writer and speak-



Maryland before becoming pastor of the Berlin Brethren Church.

Rev. Preston and his wife Helen, who is seriously ill with renal failure, have one daughter and one grandchild.

"The Berlin Brethren in Pennsylvania would encourage other congregations to observe Pastor Appreciation Day," wrote Mrs. Rae Hoffman, in reporting this event. "Our people experienced the blessings that accompany the expression of appreciation, and the pastor's ministry is enhanced by the sense of appreciation and love expressed by those with whom he ministers." [†]

Editor's note: Brethren at the Sarver Brethren Church in Pennsylvania are showing their appreciation for their pastor by giving him and his wife an all-expense-paid trip (airline flights, room and meals, etc.) to General Conference this year at Estes Park, Colo. If your church does not normally include a budget item to cover Conference expenses for your pastor and his wife, this might be a special way the church could show its appreciation to them this year.

Ashland University revives past spiritual traditions

Ashland, Ohio — Ashland University revived, in part, a past tradition in January by reintroducing weekly chapel services.

At one time chapel services were a regular event at the school, but for a time they were discontinued, except for occasional convocations. Then in the early 90s, "Meal and More" chapel services were introduced, providing an opportunity for mid-week worship twice a month.

Since January, voluntary chapel services have been held weekly—every Wednesday from 12:05 to 12:30 p.m. The pool of speakers has also been widened. Whereas in the past it was limited primarily to faculty, staff, and students within the immediate campus community, it

er Jerry Bridges, who will speak at the all-campus Easter Convocation at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 18. Mr. Bridges will also speak at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting on Tuesday evening, and to the HOPE Fellowship meeting on Wednesday evening.

"With all the spiritual decline evident in so many institutions of higher learning," said Dr. Michael Gleason, Director of Religious Life at Ashland, "I am particularly grateful that at Ashland University the president, trustees, and administration have made strong and deliberate efforts to ensure that our historic tie to Judeo-Christian values and The Brethren Church is not only maintained, but strengthened and increased, as this new millennium unfolds." [†]

— submitted by Dr. Michael Gleason



World Relief News

Mozambique

Southern Africa's worst flooding in nearly 50 years is impacting all of World Relief's programs in Mozambique, World Relief's second largest field of operation. World Relief has temporarily redirected much of its development work in Mozambique to provide emergency provisions and help rebuild destroyed homes and small family businesses.

In Maputo, the capital city, World Relief is working with a dynamic church to help rebuild the homes of 124 families who saw their homes washed away by the torrential rains. "The local church has a vision for reaching [its] community . . . and has risen up to help [its] local neighbors in need," reports World Relief's Stephen Guduz.

In the district of Chokwe, the site of many of World Relief's development programs in Mozambique, World Relief is providing food and seeds to families who lost their entire crops, and assistance in rebuilding businesses to those who lost their means of income. And because water-born diseases such as malaria and cholera are expected to dramatically increase, World Relief is working to obtain medicine.

The flooding is a temporary setback to World Relief's ongoing work of providing long-term solutions to the severe poverty and high childhood death rates in this region.

Sierra Leone

The President of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, a committed Muslim, recently acknowledged to World Relief President Clive Calver and to national church leaders the pivotal contribution that Sierra Leonean churches have made in achieving the disarmament peace that now exists in this troubled West African country.

President Kabbah also indicated

that churches had consistently outperformed Muslims in terms of their commitment to the people and their desire to aid in the improvement of conditions. Clive Calver reported after the meeting with the president.

After eight years of civil war, almost half the population of Sierra Leone is displaced, and the country now has the highest child death rate in the world. A peace accord signed in July officially ended the war, but attacks on civilians continue in some areas.

President Kabbah emphasized the fact that Christians had been at the heart of the peace process. When the war was at a stalemate, Rev. Moses Khanu, secretary general for the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone, was one of those who journeyed into the heart of the bush country, risking his life, in order to engage the rebels in a new discussion of peace that ultimately resulted in the signed accord in July. Khanu was recently appointed as World Relief's church relations liaison in Sierra Leone.

World Relief is helping churches train several hundred peacemakers who go into the bush to help others understand and support the peace accord so that the killing stops and doesn't resume. The churches are also seeking to help displaced people with material needs, reintegrate them back into their communities, provide educational materials so schools can reopen, and help amputees find meaningful work.

"This is a *kairos* [opportune] moment," said Rev. Tom Barnett, leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone. "This is God's time for World Relief to be here to help the churches respond to the needs of Sierra Leone." [✠]



Paul Reeder (center) was installed as pastor of the Corinth Brethren Church, Twelve Mile, Ind., on Sunday, December 5. Rev. David Cooksey (l.), Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, and Rev. Dennis Sigle, Indiana District moderator and pastor of the Burlington, Ind., First Brethren Church, conducted the installation service.

Pastor Reeder comes to The Brethren Church from the Bell Center Bible Church, an independent Bible congregation in Idaville, Ind. Before serving that church, he and his Japanese wife, Fumiko, whom he met in Bible College, served six years (1983-89) as missionaries in Japan. Pastor Reeder is a 1993 graduate of Grace Seminary (M.Div.). The Reeders have two daughters, Joy (15) and Sara (13).

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Vol. 122, No. 4

A newsletter for Brethren people

April 2000

Remember His Words

By Milton M. Robinson

JESUS was crucified and His body was interred in a nearby tomb. The hopes of those who had loved and trusted Him were buried along with His body.

Certain women from among His followers noted every detail of His crucifixion and burial. Then they arranged to go together to the tomb on Sunday morning.

As the women approached the tomb, they carried spices with which to embalm the body of their crucified Lord. But they were hardly prepared for the shocking discovery that awaited them. The tomb was empty! The stone had been rolled away!

The guards whom Pilate had authorized to protect the tomb were

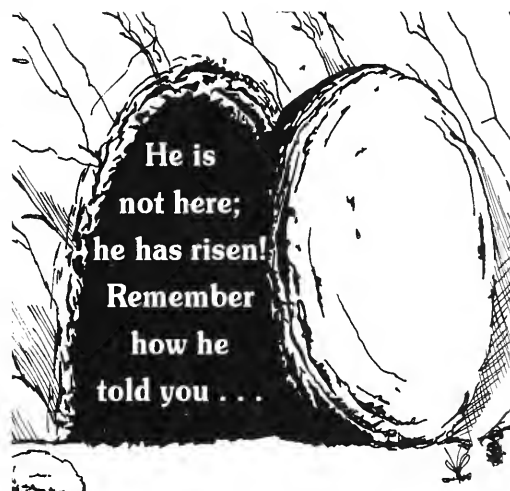
missing. Instead, according to Luke, two men appeared and asked, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Luke adds, "Then they remembered his words" (Lk. 24:6-8).

Words they remembered

I would like to suggest some of the words that the women and the other disciples remembered.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus prophesied that He would be killed and rise the third day. Early in His ministry, He answered the challenge to His authority to cleanse the temple with the reply, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (Jn. 2:19). Neither those who challenged Him nor His disciples knew that He was speaking about the temple of His body (Jn. 2:20-21). Only after Jesus was raised from the dead did the disciples realize that He had been speaking about Himself (Jn. 2:22).

After Peter's confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), Jesus began teaching His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, where He would be killed and then raised from the dead on the third day (Matt. 16:21). But at that



point the disciples could neither accept nor understand what He said (Matt. 16:22).

Jesus did more than prepare His disciples for His death and resurrection. He also taught them that He would return to the Father and would no longer be with them physically. He would send the Holy Spirit to teach them all things and to remind them of everything He had said to them (Jn. 14:25-26).

Jesus also promised them peace—a total sense of inner well-being and total rest of the spirit in fellowship with God. Further, Jesus said, "I am

(continued on next page)

Easter Morning

Tomb, thou shalt not hold Him longer;
Death is strong, but life is stronger;
Stronger than the dark, the light;
Stronger than the wrong, the right;
Faith and hope triumphant say,
"Christ will rise on Easter Day!"

While the patient earth lies waking
Till the morning shall be breaking,
Shuddering 'neath the burden dread
Of her Master, cold and dead,
Hark! she hears the angels say,
"Christ will rise on Easter Day!"

And when sunrise smites the mountains,
Pouring light from heavenly fountains,
Then the earth blooms out to greet
Once again the blessed feet;
And her countless voices say:
"Christ has risen on Easter Day!"

— Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

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going away and I'm coming back to you" (Jn. 14:28). Even on the day of His impending crucifixion, Jesus tried to prepare His followers for His death and victory over the grave when He said, "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee" (Matt. 26:32). In other words, He

would rendezvous there with them after His victory over death.

Jesus was always perfectly honest with His disciples. He advised them to count the cost of following Him. If they followed Him, they, too, would experience crosses in their lives (Lk. 9:23). He even taught

them that the time was coming when anyone who killed them would think that "he is offering a service to God" (Jn. 16:2). The Lord said further, "I have told you this, so when the time comes you will remember that I warned you" (Jn. 16:4).

Those who serve Jesus may be called upon to lay down their lives. But we have the assurance that if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him (2 Tim. 2:11).

When Jesus prophesied His resurrection, what He was saying didn't really register on the minds of His disciples. Until Christ came, the idea of a man rising from the dead was unheard of. When a person died, he stayed dead. But Jesus lives, and because He lives we can face tomorrow.

People who have never heard that God loves them respond with great joy when they are told the unbelievable good news that He does. So remember His words. He has promised to come back in power to take us to live and to reign with Him forever. And as we have seen, He always keeps His word. Share this good news with others. [✚]

Rev. Robinson is a retired Brethren pastor who lives in Oak Hill, West Virginia.

A Living Savior

By William Kerner

THE GRAY DAWN was just streaking the sky on that first day of the week when the women arrived to continue their burial preparations. The Sabbath had interrupted their work, and now they came with their prepared spices and perfumes to complete the task of anointing their beloved Friend.

On the way they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" (Mk. 16:3). Arriving, they found the stone had already been rolled away. But when they entered the tomb, "they did not find the body of Jesus" (Lk. 24:3).

While they wondered about this, two angels of the Lord appeared and asked them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" (Lk. 24:5, 6). These were the most important words spoken on that first Easter morning.

Jesus Christ must be seen as more than a hero who died. Yes, He must even be seen as more than a Savior who died on a cross. Jesus must be seen as a living Savior.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is more than a date on our calendars. True, He arose from the dead on a definite day in history, but that day is not as important as the event itself.

When Jesus arose from the dead, He conquered the power of sin and death. In addition, He became not merely a crucified Jesus, but also a living Lord and an abiding presence with His people forever. Jesus, because of the cross, is a living presence helping us live in the here and now.

The Apostle Paul best expresses the real impact of Easter for us in these words: "And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you" (Rom. 8:11).

My hope is that each one of you may be able to sing from the depths of your soul, "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart." [✚]

Rev. Kerner is a retired Brethren pastor living in Ashland, Ohio. This article first appeared in the newsletter of the Ashland Garber Brethren Church.

Through the eyes of a child

Josh, a first grader, explained a picture of the crucifixion to a friend. "Do you know what happened here?" Josh asked. His friend had no idea, so Josh told him in language that expressed his strong feelings about his friend Jesus. "Well, here's what! Jesus got whacked! But wait 'til you hear the rest of the story!"

From Teacher Touch, published by David C. Cook Church Ministries. Used by permission.

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Pontius' Pilgrimage

MANY WOULD DISMISS JESUS BY SAYING HE WAS SIMPLY A GOOD MAN.



BUT HERE, IN JERUSALEM, WE SEE WHERE JESUS WAS ARRESTED FOR WHAT HE SAID AND DID, AND PUT TO DEATH BY THE RESPECTED LEADERS OF THE DAY.



SO, THE REAL QUESTION WE ARE LEFT TO CONTEMPLATE: JESUS WAS EITHER A REALLY BAD GUY... OR THE SON OF GOD WHO DIED TO SET US FREE!



© Joel Kauffman

Ratios for growing churches*

How many visitors does a church need in order to grow?

By Charles Arn

At least five of every 100 persons in a Sunday morning worship service should be visitors.

HOW MANY VISITORS does a church need in order to grow? The first response might be "One." But this does not take into account the "back door."

Below are statistics for two typical churches—one of 185 members, the other of 850 members. They show the average yearly exit out the back door. (*Numbers in parentheses indicate percentage of total membership.*)

Type of loss	Church of 185 members	Church of 850 members
Transfer out	5 people (2.7%)	24 people (2.8%)
Death	2 people (1.1%)	10 people (1.2%)
Reversion	3 people (1.6%)	51 people (6%)
Total members lost per year	10 people (5.4%)	85 people (10%)

For purposes of comparison, in 1997 The Brethren Church as a whole lost 2.5% of its members by transfer out, 1.3% by death, and 4% by reversion, for a total loss of 7.7%. In 1998 the figures were 1.7% by transfer out, 1.3% by death, and 4.7% by reversion, for a total loss again of 7.7%. In 1997 the losses were more than offset by the gains, resulting in a net gain in members. But that was not the case in 1998, and the result was a net loss in members. Figures for 1999 were not yet available at time of publication.

The typical church will lose from six to ten percent of its members each year through the back door. To

*This is the second in a series of articles on "Ratios for Growing Churches" by Dr. Arn. The first appeared in the February EVANGELIST (p. 1) under the title "Four ways to make your church attendance bulge." The articles are based on Dr. Arn's research in the areas of church growth and church health.

determine your church's back-door losses, study the last five years. How many people transferred out? How many died? How many reversions did you have (members who dropped out of church involvement)?

In the above illustration, note that the church of 185 will not show any annual growth until the eleventh member is added. If the church has 73 visitors a year (an average of one to two visitors per Sunday), and sees 15 percent of those visitors join in the coming year (the average for many churches), the church will add 11 new members. But since the church will lose 10 existing members, it will show a net growth of only one member.

If the larger church sees 572 visitors a year—an average of 11 per Sunday—and 15 percent of these visitors join, the church will add 85 new people. But recall that it will also lose around 85 members, so it will experience no growth.

An analysis of your church's visitor flow can provide a reasonably accurate forecast of your membership one year from now, since most people who join a church will visit it first. Try completing the information for your church on the chart at the top of the next column.

An increase in worship attendance from your projected numbers on the chart will come from one of two sources: an increase in the number of visitors, and/or an increase in the percentage of visitors you keep.

A growth strategy to increase

A. Worship Attendance

B. Number of Visitors: total number of visitors in the past 52 weeks

C. Annual Visitor Retention: percent of first-time visitors who join your church within the following 12 months, based on your previous 5-year average (most churches retain from 8% to 25% of first-time visitors)

D. Annual Projected Losses: average annual percent of total membership who have left your church in the last five years through death, transfer, or reversion (most churches lose 6% to 10% per year)

E. Projected One-Year Attendance Growth/Decline (Number of visitors times visitor retention) minus projected losses

F. Projected Worship Attendance in One Year: projected growth/decline plus or minus present worship attendance

worship attendance can focus on either of these two areas (or on both). For example, if on average visitors make up only two percent of your Sunday service, develop a strategy to increase that to four percent in the coming year. Or if you retain only ten percent of your visitors, seek an effective strategy to increase that rate to 20 percent.

The number of visitors provides an accurate forecast of a church's future growth. The 5:100 ratio (five visitors for every 100 people in attendance at the morning worship service) is a realistic target. [†]

*Dr. Charles Arn is president of Church Growth, Inc., Monrovia, Calif. His latest book is **How to Start a New Worship Service** (Baker Books).*

Brethren Impact Through Prayer

The National Day of Prayer is a day set aside annually to pray for our nation, its leaders, our communities, our churches, our families and children, and for each other. It is also a time of prayer dedicated to seeking unity and healing for our nation and for our nation's people.

"PRAY2K, America's Hope for the New Millennium" is the theme for this year's day of prayer. It will be observed Thursday, May 4.

For ideas and resources for observing the National Day of Prayer, see the National Day of Prayer web site at www.nationaldayofprayer.org.

—Karen Frado

Accent on a Brethren Student at Ashland University

Rachel Pennington



The following is the third in a series of interviews between Dr. Michael Gleason, Director of Religious Life at Ashland University, and Brethren students on the Ashland campus.

Dr. Gleason: Rachel, it has been a blessing to have you at Ashland University. I've appreciated the way that you've been involved from your first day on campus right up to the present semester. For those readers who don't know you, introduce yourself, telling where you are from as well as sharing about your past and current involvement in Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC).

Rachel: My name is Rachel Pennington and I am from Oak Hill, West Virginia, where I was raised in the Oak Hill First Brethren Church. I have been involved in Southeastern District youth committees as well as in my local youth group. Currently I am a member of the National BYIC Steering Committee. But perhaps the most rewarding work I've done in the BYIC has been the Summer Ministries programs. I served as a District Crusader, as an Intern in Florida and in my home district, and as a National Crusader. This summer, I'll see the other side, as I'll serve as an Intern at the Brethren Church National Office.

Dr. Gleason: On campus you serve as an officer in the Christian organization HOPE. What are some of your duties in that position?

Rachel: As a HOPE officer, I lead the drama team ministry. HOPE had a drama ministry before I came to Ashland University as a student, but it focused more on doing dramas and skits within HOPE's services. I started out as a soccer player at AU, but an injury and God's will forced

me out of that. I don't think I was ever supposed to play soccer. Since then God has filled my life with things that glorify Him. I made the mistake of allowing sports to become my "god" in a sense. I loved sports more than I loved Him, and He put me in my place, so to speak. I use that testimony of how we need to heed to God's call on our lives. When I yielded to Him, He gave me visions and goals of a ministry to begin.

In addition to the drama team ministry, I serve with fellow officers who plan the actual HOPE meetings and events. Each officer is in charge of a particular ministry, which includes a missions team and a worship team in addition to the drama ministry. I play drums for the worship team. It was one of those situations where they needed a drummer, so I taught myself to play drums. Yes, with God all things are possible!

"A popular saying that we use on campus is 'PUSH' — 'Pray Until Something Happens.'"

Dr. Gleason: What is your greatest challenge as a student at Ashland University?

Rachel: When I was in high school attending BYIC Conventions, I thought Ashland was the place to be. Both my mother and my grandfather came to school here, and I wanted to come here ever since I was 14. But when I arrived here as a student, I encountered a major challenge—not so much with the professors as with the students, whose lifestyle choices differed from mine.

My desire is to see the majority of students at Ashland have a relationship with Jesus Christ. And it is always a challenge when I see how many actually do have one.

Dr. Gleason: Describe in greater detail your involvement with the drama ministry, also telling how a church that has interest might be able to get a team from the university, as student schedules permit.

Rachel: The drama ministry started out as a small vision. I tried the vision out with my church youth group one year, and it turned out to be a success. So I went further and began doing programs with HOPE students, doing them mostly for Brethren activities. We did a program for the BYIC national rally, and then one for the campus. We also began moving into other denominations with our message. That then grew to the possibility of a summer ministry supported by The Brethren Church.

Currently the ministry is experiencing so much success that I am praying about doing this when I graduate. We are also sending out letters to those we ministered to in the past, seeking support so that we can purchase our own equipment.

We would love to do performances for local churches. Any church that is interested can contact me by phone at 419-207-4463 or by e-mail at rpenning2ashland.edu. We do worship services as well as youth services.

Dr. Gleason: How could friends from The Brethren Church pray for both you and the ministry here at Ashland?

Rachel: For one thing, just pray—period. A popular saying that we use on campus is "PUSH"—"Pray Until Something Happens." My main request would be that Brethren uplift all of the ministries on this campus: HOPE Fellowship and its ministries (missions, drama, and worship); the campus radio show I co-host, with Christian talk and music; and the column that I write for the campus newspaper. Pray that God will draw people to these ministries and that His Spirit will be present to convict, because it's only by the Spirit that people come to know Jesus. [✠]

The Dollars and Cents of Planting New Brethren Churches

By Emanuel W. Sandberg

WE ARE CALLED CHRISTIANS because we believe in and follow our Lord Jesus Christ. We are called Brethren because we have joined together in an association of believers committed to helping *all people* come to know and experience Jesus. We are commissioned to be evangelists, and our goal as Christians is to recruit disciples and train them to follow Jesus.

Our Vision Path

We have accepted God's vision path for The Brethren Church and have adopted it as our guide to the future. (See "A Look Toward the Future" in the January 2000 *EVANGELIST*, pp. 1-3). This Vision Path will lead us to our chosen future, and over the next decade will see us:

- Developing and participating in a Global Program of Evangelism.
- Planting at least 50 new Brethren churches, including inner-city and Hispanic churches.
- Joining arms with our Brethren as active church-planting supporters, with every Brethren church a sponsor or co-sponsor of a church plant.
- Expanding the geographic spread of Brethren churches.
- Joyfully participating in the Renewal of Pastor and People for every Brethren church.
- Challenging all Brethren to new

levels of performance in accordance with their spiritual gifts and the resources God has provided us.

God's vision for our lives will clarify the purpose and direction of our lives. We are being challenged to grow in our Christian beliefs and to set and accept new standards of ministry and action for ourselves.

But how will we do this? In the glaring light of reality, we have to ask, "How will we *pay* for this vision?" We know that a vision without a plan is just a dream.



**"Think of it! This major multiplication
of our Great Commission efforts
would cost us individually less than
a cup of coffee or a soft drink per day."**



Whom will God send to plant these churches, to evangelize the people of the world, to renew and transform our people and churches? Who will do it? And how will we pay for it?

I know that planting churches is expensive. The cost to plant a church will probably average \$250,000. But that is the *total cost*. That cost will be shared by many—the district that sponsors the church, the National Office, the mother church, etc.

12.5 million dollars

If that is the average cost per church, the total cost for our decade-long program of planting 50 churches will be 50 times \$250,000, or \$12,500,000. That is a large amount of money, but if we think of

it as the responsibility of *all* Brethren and *all* Brethren churches over a ten-year period, the burden is not nearly so heavy.

For example, we have approximately 13,500 Brethren members. If each member contributed \$1 per day, over a one-year period we would together contribute a total of almost \$5 million. Actually we don't need that level of support. A contribution of just 25 cents per member per day, with all members participating, would adequately fund the church-planting program.

Think of it! This major multiplication of our Great Commission efforts would cost us individually less than a cup of coffee or a soft drink per day. Is it expensive? Not really, if we work together and share the burden.

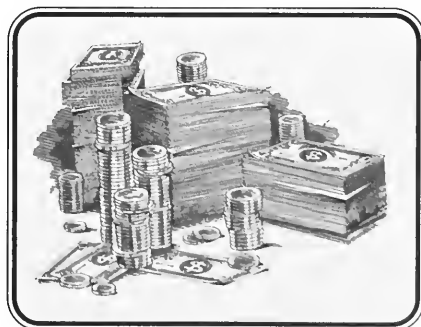
Examine your commitment

We are given the opportunity to participate. I ask that each one of us examine our commitment to the church of Jesus Christ and decide what level of support for Brethren Church multiplication we are willing to make. Make that commitment

in your mind and heart, and then take one additional step: make sure that your congregation has a plan and a process for encouraging its members to participate and

then follow through on their church-planting pledges. If all the members of your congregation do this, your church will receive a new spirit. [✠]

Dr. Sandberg is Executive Director for The Brethren Church.



Implementing our vision for 50 new churches

By Reilly R. Smith

OUR VISION to plant 50 new Brethren churches by 2010 is ambitious but achievable. In this article, I want to describe the current state of United States Missions in The Brethren Church and then share some plans for the future.

Looking around

The members of **Iglesia de los Hermanos in Sarasota, Florida**, called Italo Abuid to be their new pastor. A new steering committee will help Italo and the church develop and execute a strategic plan. Former Brethren missionary Dr. Ken Solomon serves as Pastor Abuid's mentor. Iglesia de los Hermanos is growing, with attendance running about 45. Pastor Abuid is working hard both at leading the church and at preparing for ordination.

Dr. Jeff Kaplan, church planter for **Rocky Mountain Community**

Church in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, continues to build a core team. (See article by Pastor Kaplan on page 9.)

Pastor Mike Woods reports new growth at **Grace Community Church in Winchester, Virginia**. Worship attendance is averaging nearly 120. He also reports a recent influx of new visitors every week. Two volunteers recently took over the children's and youth ministries. So far, they've recruited 10 new workers. (See additional item about *Grace Community Church* below.)

Pastor Jim and Stephanie Boyd report that average attendance at **Rock Springs Community Church** in Carlsbad, Calif., has grown from 34 to 76 since relaunching last fall. (See Pastor Boyd's article on page 8.)

Oasis Community Church in Chandler, Ariz., celebrated its first

anniversary on March 5 with a special service and meal. Approximately 120 people attended. Four members shared what God has done in their lives since joining Oasis. A video presented highlights from the congregation's first year. In addition, Pastor Jim Miller presented his vision for a series of daughter churches surrounding the East Valley of the Phoenix area.

Pastor Jim and Elaine Thomas are reporting steady growth at **Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship** in Peru, Indiana. (See article by Pastor Thomas on next page.)

Attendance at **Living Waters Community Church** in Mansfield, Ohio, is running in the mid-90s, with more than 100 in worship on several recent Sundays. In addition to visitors from the surrounding community, people travel from as far away as 35 miles in all directions to attend the services. Pastor Ron Miller reports that Rich Rader recently joined the Living Waters staff and will be focusing on outreach, discipleship, and worship.

Dr. Juan Carlos and María Miranda started a small group in their Pasadena, Calif., home last fall in order to begin another Spanish-speaking Brethren church. On February 13, **Centro Cristiano para la Familia** began holding public worship services on Sunday afternoons in a Nazarene church building. The group is gearing up for an official launch on Easter Sunday and will do some kind of outreach blitz in the Hispanic community prior to that date. The core group is about 35 people.

Rev. Juan and Amelia Arregin lead **Iglesia de los Hermanos in Tucson, Arizona**. This congregation meets in the First Brethren Church building on Sunday afternoons. Attendance averages about 25. Six people received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in the last few weeks.

Rev. Jerry and Linda Barr lead **Gateway Brethren Fellowship** in Hagerstown, Maryland. Pastor Jerry serves as a bi-vocational pastor. A few tent-making families

Farewell to the Scotts

On Sunday, February 13, 2000, **Grace Community Church** of Winchester, Va., said goodbye to Chris and Heather Scott. The Scotts were part of the church-planting team at Grace Community.

Chris joined the Grace Community team with the expressed purpose of planting a Generation X-focused ministry. The plan was to begin the work under the auspices of Grace Community and then spin it off as a separate Brethren church.

GenX ministry in Winchester proved to be more of a challenge than seeker-targeted ministry—the ministry model chosen by Grace Community. As time went on, Chris became more and more focused on GenX ministry and less involved in the day-to-day ministry of Grace Community Church.

Chris now plans to continue his work independent of The Brethren Church. He and Heather plan to remain in the Winchester area and to



develop a coffeehouse ministry. They would appreciate your prayers on their behalf as they launch out on their own.

As an expression of appreciation to the Scotts, Grace Community Church presented them a plaque and flowers, as well as a shovel—symbolic of the planting effort involved with new ministries.

— Rev. Mike Woods, pastor
Grace Community Church

joined the ministry over the last year or so. Worship attendance is running in the mid-20s.

Rev. Mike and Pam Sove and Rev. Chuck and Liz Wolfenbarger lead **Vineyard Community Church** in Franklin, Ohio. This cell church is growing in numbers and ministries. Vineyard Community averages about 250 in attendance. It is rapidly progressing towards becoming a self-supporting congregation.

Rev. Pat and Kathy Velanzon lead **Cross Keys Worship Center** in Port Republic, Virginia. This group of Brethren is very creative. They held a Leap Year frog-leg feed on February 29 (see page 11); they've held Veterans' Day dinners, Sundae Sunday, crazy hat day, etc. As a result, they are reaching a wide variety of people. Pastor Velanzon plans to start a daughter church in about a year and a half.

Looking ahead

Our plans for starting additional Brethren churches are beginning to take shape. The Ohio District and the Missionary Ministries Council continue to pursue planting a church in Delaware County, Ohio. A church planter has been assessed and trained, and he and his wife are being interviewed by the steering committee.

Many of the churches mentioned above are planning to start daughter congregations within the next three years. In addition, at least two other Brethren churches are planning to start daughter congregations within the next year or two.

Dr. Buzz Sandberg and I are targeting the Gainesville, Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa Bay areas in Florida for a series of new churches. We will be recruiting teams to plant several reproducing churches. The Pennsylvania and Indiana Districts are also doing research as they seek for locations to plant new churches.

What your church can do

Every Brethren congregation can participate in the vision to start new Brethren churches. **One** very practical **way** your church can do so is by starting an outreach ministry to a new neighborhood or group of peo-

ple in your community or in a nearby town. This ministry might develop into the core group for a new church, or it might become a vital part of the existing church. Either way, four very good things will have happened:

- (1) The church will have deliberately reached out to new people.
- (2) New people will have come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- (3) The church will have been energized.
- (4) God will have been glorified because of the members' efforts.

A **second way** your church can help is by giving its full financial fair share to the district and The Brethren Church. This will help your district and the Missionary Ministries Council to provide leadership, training, resources, and support for new church-planting efforts.

A **third way** your church can help is by adopting a new church or church planter. Some churches may be able to sponsor a new church alone by supplying human (long-term, temporary, and occasional workers), financial, and physical (office or worship space, supplies, etc.) resources. Other churches may

need to join together to sponsor a new church. Organizing encouragement and prayer teams is as important as giving resources.

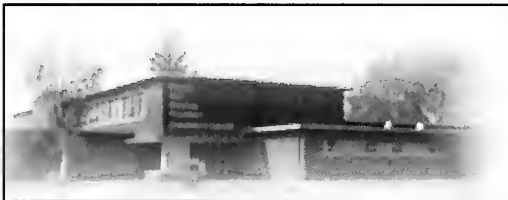
A **fourth way** your church can help is by encouraging its members to join the personal support team of a Brethren church planter.

Possibility thinking

Fifty new churches in 10 years seem like a lot. But if 8 of our current 12 church plants each produces a daughter congregation in the next three years and then another in the next five years, we will have planted 16 new churches. If the initial daughter churches also reproduce once in their first five years, we will have planted 24 new churches.

If the two established churches that are planning to start daughter churches do so, then do it again in the following five years, and if the first two daughter churches reproduce just once more during that time, we will have planted a total of 30 new churches. If we plant just one church in each of the Florida cities above and they each reproduce once, we will have planted a total of 38 new churches.

(continued at bottom of next page)



Eagle's Nest

The month of March brought us to our first-year anniversary. This year has been a great journey of faith, as we have followed God by the leading of His Spirit.

Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship is located in one of the fastest-growing areas of Indiana at a former Air Force Base. Throughout this year we have opened up our facility as a community center for the Eagle's Pointe and surrounding communities. Some of the on-going activities include four Boy Scout Dens, two Girl Scout groups, a Red Cross Blood Mobile site, and a Red Cross Disaster Shelter. In addition, Indiana University and Ivy Tech

have held classes here.

As a new church, we have been privileged to be part of what God is doing. We believe that God is at work all around us and that He has invited us to be a part of His work. He is doing

great things. We have seen 48 first-time conversions and many more rededications.

God is at work here with people of all ages, but particularly with the youth. Of the 48 conversions we've seen, 36 have been youth. We have somewhere between 70 and 90 youth involved in our youth program. We average about 60 or more youth each week at the youth meeting. As each month passes, more of them are getting involved with our Sunday service. In addition to these programs, we plan to open a teen coffeehouse very soon.

I am privileged to be a part of a growing number of people who are excited about serving God. [✠]

— Rev. Jim Thomas, pastor

Location, Location, Location

By Jim Boyd

Pastor of Rock Springs Community Church

REAL ESTATE AGENTS will tell you that the three most important factors affecting the value of a piece of property are location, location, location. In church planting, the same principle holds true when selecting an effective meeting site. Real estate agents measure the value of a piece of property by its ability to attract potential buyers. At Rock Springs we measure its value by its ability to attract lost people. Here's our story.

In October 1998 The Brethren Church planted Rock Springs Community Church in Vista, California. We rented five classrooms on the second floor of National University and began services. By the summer of 1999 we had 33 regular attenders.

Many outsiders looked at the numbers and thought we had failed. But I knew this wasn't the case. We were experiencing something dynamic as God worked in our midst. People were being saved and discipled, and we were thrilled to be doing life together as a church family.

During the summer of 1999, con-

tent with 33, we made two important decisions:

- (1) to move the church to a new site in the middle of a brand-new housing development;
- (2) to meet for three months at an interim site in order to build momentum and excitement for a relaunch.

It worked! For three months we squeezed the new core team into our home on Sunday mornings. Then on October 3, 1999, we relaunched the church at Carillo elementary school in Carlsbad, California.

Although only 15 minutes away from our old location, we are in a whole new world. National University was in an established section of town. Studies show that people in established areas are often closed to the gospel. The Rancho Carillo community is brand new. People in new communities (new home-owners) are in a state of transition, looking for new relationships, and open to the gospel. Here's the proof: in the last three weeks at Rock Springs, nine Carillo residents have accepted Christ as their Savior.

Our old location was at the end of a business park cul-de-sac. Our new meeting site is on the main street

through the community, providing greater exposure for our signs and a sense that we are part of the community. Formerly, people had to climb three flights of stairs to reach our meeting site. Now large double doors open directly onto the parking lot. At our old location the outside grounds were not conducive to play opportunities for children or to after-church picnics. Our new location is designed especially for children, and the grounds were planned for community use.

Furthermore, our new location is centered on the people we are trying to reach: young families. Their children attend the school. Their familiarity with the school adds to our credibility, promotes their sense of ownership, and decreases the discomfort level of the unchurched who visit. In church planting, it has been shown that you reach people who relate to you. Our new location is a better reflection of who we are.

We now have 76 regular attenders. We continue to experience something dynamic as God works in our midst. People are being saved and discipled. We are thrilled to be experiencing and sharing life together as a church family.

Overall, location, location, location has proved to be the most effective means of outreach benefitting our church growth and development. It can help you as well! Don't be afraid to shut old doors in order to open new opportunities. God may be leading you to a new land. [✠]

Implementing our vision

(continued from page 7)

If the Pennsylvania and Indiana districts are able to plant one church each and those reproduce once more, we will have planted 42 new churches. And if only 20 of the new ministries started by existing Brethren congregations turn into new churches...

The Missionary Ministries Council plans to host a church-planting summit next year. We hope to inspire, challenge, call, and equip many Brethren churches and people to church planting through this 2001 Brethren Impact Church Planting Summit. Watch for more details in future issues of the EVANGELIST. [✠]

Rev. Smith is Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church.

Reaching the Unchurched Through Small Groups

By Jim Miller

Rev. Miller is pastor of Oasis Community Church, a new Brethren church in Chandler, Ariz. The principles below, which he learned while in an earlier pastorate, are being used in this new work.

PUT YOUR MONEY where your mouth is. Practice what you preach. Those were expressions I knew people would apply to me as I became a bivocational pastor by entering the business world as a bank teller. For years I had told people they needed to share their faith boldly with their co-workers. Now they would be watching me to see

if I could live up to those words.

Little did I know as I arrived at the bank that first day that I would begin one of the most exciting adventures of my life! The relationships I developed with my co-workers (mostly women 18 to 21 years old) resulted in the beginning of a small group geared toward answering their questions about faith. What I'd like to share are some things learned from that experience about using small groups as an outreach tool.

1. The unchurched are interested in a forum in which they can openly explore faith-questions. We invited 17 people to a barbecue in order to present this idea. I told them that we would simply solicit questions anonymously from them about God, Jesus, faith, and the Bible.

Defining our purpose and vision

By Jeff Kaplan

Pastor of Rocky Mountain Community Church

CHURCHES are increasingly seeing the value of having a clearly-articulated document that describes who they are and where they are going. It is especially important for a church planter to be able to put into words the vision and purpose of a new church. The very survival of the new group depends upon it.

As the church planter for Rocky Mountain Community Church—located in the fastest-growing suburb (Highlands Ranch) of our nation's fastest-growing-county (Douglas County)—I am acutely aware of the importance of being able to share the vision and purpose for this church with prospects. Unless I can do so, the church will never get off the ground.

A good vision for a church needs to be born out of a scriptural understanding of the purposes of the church. Therefore it is valuable to begin by recognizing the five purposes of the church contained in two monumental statements by Jesus.

One of those statements is the Great Commandment, found in Matthew 22:37-40. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind [*worship*].

This is the first and greatest. The second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself [*service*]. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

In addition to worshiping God and serving people, the church has three more purposes, which are found in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 and 20. Before His ascension, Jesus said to His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations [*evangelism*], baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit [*fellowship*], teaching them to observe all that I commanded you [*instruction*]; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

From these words of our Lord, we can conclude that the five biblical purposes of the church are worship, instruction, fellowship, evangelism, and service. Taking the first letter of each of these words gives us the quasi-word "wives." While the plural of wife is "wives," "wives" is nevertheless memorable. Keeping "wives" in mind, our church has adopted the following statements:

"The **purpose** of Rocky Mountain Community Church is to make more and better disciples of the

Lord Jesus Christ in the Highlands Ranch area and beyond by:

- Exalting God through **worship**;
- Edifying one another through **instruction**;
- Encouraging one another through **fellowship**;
- Evangelizing our local and foreign mission fields through **evangelism** and missions;
- Equipping one another through **service**."

"Our **mission** is to bring as many unbelievers as possible to Jesus (evangelism), then lead them into membership in our fellowship (fellowship), develop them to Christ-like maturity (instruction), and equip them for their ministry (service) so they can worship God and magnify His name (worship)."

"Our **vision** is to reach (evangelism) and lead (service) as many people for Jesus as possible through a dynamic, contemporary church (worship) that is biblically solid (instruction) and culturally relevant (fellowship) in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, and beyond."

That's who we are and where we are going. If you would like to find out how you and/or your church can partner with us to launch a new and dynamic Brethren church, feel free to contact me.*

May God bless you big time. [✠]

*Jeff Kaplan, 9811 S. Spring Hill Place, Highlands Ranch, CO 80126 (303-471-9420; Jeff.Kaplan@juno.com.)

even came for that that first meeting, and we averaged 10 over the two years the group ran. What we found was that these young women genuinely wanted to know what the Bible had to say about the practical things of life.

2. Everyone has a faith story to tell. Five opportunities for people to tell their stories. We invested much time doing this. I was surprised how willing they were to give details of their faith experience, whether it was a bad experience at church as a child or a good experience with a loving grandparent who taught them about Christ.

3. Be unshockable. Tony Evans says that he has come to expect sinners to sin. We need to learn to accept people where they are, no matter what comes

out in the group. Like Jesus, we need to be known as a friend of sinners.

4. Don't assume any level of biblical knowledge. Some in our group had never opened a Bible before. We had to start with statements like; "The Bible is divided into books, chapters, and verses. When I say John 3:16, here's what I mean." It's good if everyone uses the same kind of Bible so you can give page numbers when looking up passages.

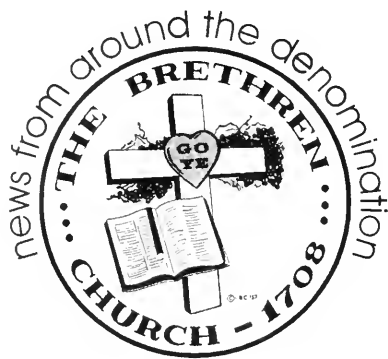
5. Get rid of "christianeze." Replace terms like sanctification, righteousness, and redemption with word pictures they can understand.

6. Continually take opportunities to explain the gospel. For two years I told this group about Jesus every time we met. Several accepted Christ, some

rededicated their lives, and all of them understood that God loved them and wanted to be in relationship with them.

7. Understand just how special a thing God is doing with you. I once asked the women what they thought of when I said "church." The first response came from Amber, who said, "I think of this group. This is church for me!" The others quickly agreed. God was speaking to their hearts in ways that may never have happened on a Sunday morning.

You can't imagine the fun of having pre-believers in your small group. Their questions and attitudes are childlike, their steps small. But when they finally "get it" and step into the kingdom of God, there is no greater reward! [✠]



Briefly Noted



The Falls City, Nebraska, First Brethren Church began a second worship service recently, according to Pastor William G. Shipman. The contemporary service is led by Ted Schowengerdt, who now serves the congregation as co-pastor. The new service has increased total Sunday attendance to approximately 100, with 70 in the regular service and 30 in the new. The church is looking forward to even higher attendances as the new service catches on.

Pastors and Wives Retreat

"Leading the Church into the Future" will be the theme of this year's Brethren Pastors and Wives Retreat, to be held May 9-11 in the Abe Martin Lodge at Brown County State Park, Nashville, Indiana.

Dr. Charles Lake, senior pastor of the Greenwood, Ind., Community Church, will be the featured speaker. Under his leadership the Greenwood Church has grown to 1,500 in worship attendance. The church has also planted eight daughter congregations. Dr. Lake's messages will focus on changing trends in ministry and the kind of pastoral leadership needed to meet those trends.

Scott Ailes, manager of the Advanced Technologies division of The Woodwind and the Brasswind, the world's largest music center, will lead a workshop on recent developments in audio technology and how they can impact worship. He and his wife Amy will also lead a time of worship.

Registration information has been sent to pastors and elders. The registration deadline is April 24. [T]

Park Street Brethren Church launches fourth Sunday morning worship service

Ashland, Ohio — Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland launched a fourth morning worship service on Sunday, March 5, and the response was overwhelming.

At least 300 people attended the new 11:00 a.m. service. Approximately 100 of those were people who had also attended an earlier service that morning. Others were people (particularly youth) who were switching to this service. But an estimated 100 or more of those present were visitors who had come to check out the new service.

Total attendance at all services for the morning was approximately 870. Even subtracting 100 for the people who attended two services, the "official count" of 769 for the morning was well over the 1999 worship average of 570.

Called *the Crossing*, the new service seeks to be "a Christian encounter" that overcomes stereotypes that would prevent people from participating in worship. The service is informal, dress is casual, the music is current and aggressive (with lots of percussion), and the service is held not in the "sanctuary" but in the gymnasium of the Family Life Center. Rev. Don Belsterling, Park Street's Pastor of Youth Discipleship, who gives the messages for the service, preaches in a tee-shirt and jeans.

"What we are trying to do," says Pastor Belsterling "is fight negative connotations associated with church." In dress, worship style, and language, every effort is made to avoid erecting barriers for non-Christians and the unchurched who attend. For example, Pastor Belsterling, worship leader Doug Cooper, and others who lead the service seek to avoid using "churchy" language unfamiliar to newcomers. Other aspects of the service include a friendly, non-threatening atmosphere, variety, freedom to move around, refreshments, flexibility, and interaction in the service between

"I'm not sure God exists"
"I don't understand"
"Church is boring!"
"I don't like the music!"
"I have nothing to wear."

You may avoid church for a number of reasons...

The Crossing at Park Street is different...really!

There's great music, genuine people and exciting messages that you can understand and apply to your life. And you can wear anything you want! Maybe it's time for you to give church a try—at a place where you'll feel comfortable.

Come change your ideas about church.

the Crossing
a Christian encounter

Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

Park Street Brethren Family Life Center
619 Park Street in Ashland • 289-0224
www.parkstreetbrethren.org (Nursery provided)

One of the newspaper advertisements that were used to publicize *the Crossing*.

leaders and worship participants.

Pastor Belsterling is quick to point out, however, that even though "the approach is casual, the dynamics are intense." "Our primary emphasis is to worship God in Christ without compromise," he said, noting that the approach is seeker-sensitive but not seeker-driven. He added, "The goal is that non-Christians who come will witness genuine and attractive worship and see it as something they want."

Planning in a general way for this service began three years ago, when a third morning worship service was added. Dr. Arden Gilmer, senior pastor of the church, asked the staff to begin thinking even then about another service (when it would meet, type of service, etc.). Specific planning for this new service began about a year ago, and intense preparations by the ten people who make up the core team for *the Crossing* began last December. This process was also bathed in prayer. Pastor

(continued on next page)

Frog legs, Blue Grass music featured at Cross Keys Leap Year Community Supper

Port Republic, Va. — Brethren at Cross Keys Worship Center invited their community to celebrate "Leap Day" (Feb. 29) with them at a free Leap Year Community Supper. The carry-in supper featured a taste of frog legs (Pastor Pat Velanzon got 15 pounds of them from a local Chinese restaurant) and the sound of Blue Grass music, provided by the Cross Keys musicians.

Invitations to the event were extended to the community by means of posters, flyers, and newspaper advertisements (*at right*)—all featuring leaping frogs—as well as by word of mouth. As a result people came in droves—with the resident head-counter losing track at 120 when it became necessary to scurry around for extra tables and every available chair.

Many new people attended the

(continued from previous page)

Belsterling noted that for the past three months thoughts about this service have dominated his mind.

Two main means were used to publicize the service—newspaper advertisements (*see previous page*) and word of mouth by Park Street members. In addition, brochures advertising *the Crossing* were delivered to 100 apartments in an apartment complex in one area of Ashland, and a mailing about the service was sent to 1,000 homes surrounding the church.

As noted above, Park Street Church now has four Sunday morning worship services: contemporary services at 8:30 and 9:45, a blended service (mix of traditional and contemporary) at 11:00, and *the Crossing*, also at 11:00. Dr. Gilmer preaches at all services except *the Crossing*. Attendances for *the Crossing* on the two Sundays following the initial service were 210 and 203, and total worship attendances for those two Sundays were 681 and 735. While pleased about the attendances for *the Crossing*, Pastor Belsterling emphasized that "our goal is not numbers but to impact lives in the pursuit of God."

— reported by Richard Winfield



LEAP YEAR

FREE Community Supper
Tues., Feb. 29 7-9 p.m.

Enjoy taste of
FROG LEGS
Bring covered dish.
Enjoy Bluegrass Music
Cross Keys/Mill Creek Ruritan Hall
Battlefield Rd.

Host- **Cross Keys Worship Center**

free event, to the joy of the Cross Keys group. According to Kathy Velanzon, the pastor's wife, Cross Keys is "really gaining recognition in the community, and the Lord is adding new members and families."

In addition to this community outreach event, the Cross Keys group had an in-house fellowship lunch on Sunday, February 6. In honor of Groundhog Day earlier that week, they called this meal the "Roadkill Fellowship Lunch." Everyone brought "real" food (or so they



say), but named them like items on the menu of Roadkill Café. Among the mouth-watering entrees were mangled muskrat with macaroni and mozzarella; rattlesnake kabob, chunk of skunk, and gator steaks. All had fun cooking and naming their creations.

Lest we think that all events at Cross Keys Worship Center are on the lighthearted side, Mrs. Velanzon reports that the congregation is preparing for a 50-day spiritual adventure from Easter until Pentecost. They are hoping for 100 percent participation by members of the congregation.

Editor's note: You may have noticed a number of items about Cross Keys Worship Center in recent issues of the *EVANGELIST*. In case you've wondered why, the reasons are simple: (1) the Cross Keys Brethren are doing some interesting and innovative things to reach their community, and (2) someone—namely Kathy Velanzon—reports them. If your church is doing something interesting and innovative, the editor would be delighted to hear about it.

Lanark, Ill. — Members of the Lanark First Brethren Church honored their pastors Sunday, October 24, 1999, with a surprise Pastor Appreciation Day. Senior Pastor Jim Garret and his wife Elizabeth (*right*) were given a large quilt with squares made by members of the congregation that were assembled on the quilt by Paulette Rahn.



Associate Pastor Bob Schubert (*left*) and his new bride Joyce were given a quilted pillow with their wedding picture as the center. Both pastors also received many cards from members of the congregation.

The Garretts have served at the Lanark church since 1993. They have three children, Matthew, Lora, and Benjamin. Pastor Schubert has served the Lanark church since 1992.

— reported by Joyce Michael



Goshen Brethren excited about events in the church

Goshen, Ind. — Members of the First Brethren Church of Goshen are excited about some recent church events, as well as about events yet to come.

In December the church welcomed John Howenstine as the new youth pastor. His wife Kim and children, Katie and Caleb, are also wonderful additions to the church family.

John wasted no time before scheduling a youth bash—called “Y2B”—for New Year’s Eve. The youth had a great time eating pizza, listening to a live band, playing games at a local recreation center, and watching movies till the wee hours of the morning. Several youth invited their non-Christian friends, using the event as an outreach opportunity.

In January Pastor Brad Whitehead challenged the congregation with this vision statement: *The First Brethren Church of Goshen will strive to be “a vibrant, growing, Spirit-filled ministry that is creative and made up of believers who are equipped and passionate about modeling the life of Christ by being committed to building family, ministering to an increasingly diverse community and sending out ministers to the nations.”* His sermon detailed ways to attain this vision. The Brethren departed that morning with a renewed desire to work together for good.

During February several members of the congregation traveled to Escuela Caribe in the Dominican Republic to do short-term mission work. They helped with construction projects, held a Bible school in a remote village, and established relationships with the staff and students at the school.

Please join the Goshen Brethren in praying for the “Stand-Up” rally for youth that will be held April 14–15 at the Pontiac Silverdome in Detroit, Mich. A total of 115 young people and adults from the church have signed up to attend, and they look forward to a life-changing revival.

— submitted by Jenny Graber,
Public Relations Committee

Brethren in Ohio observe a “Day of Prayer” to pray for the district’s leaders and churches

Canton, Ohio — Approximately 45 Brethren from the Ohio district gathered at Trinity Brethren Church in Canton on Saturday, February 26, for a “Day of Prayer for the Ohio Conference of The Brethren Church.” They spent approximately three hours in worship, praise, and prayer.

Ohio District Moderator Lynn Mercer, who had declared the Day of Prayer, led the gathering. The morning session focused on praying for the boards, officers, and committees of the district.

Taking each board in turn, Rev. Mercer gave a description of the board’s responsibilities and noted some of its needs. Then he asked those in attendance to divide into small groups for prayer, with all groups praying for the board as a whole and each group praying specifically for one of the board’s members.

In similar fashion, time was spent praying for the various officers of the district and for the district committees. Between the times of prayer, Tony Price, associate pastor of Trinity Church, and his wife Geneva (at the piano) led the group in singing.

Following a lunch provided by Trinity Church, the time of praise and prayer continued, with the afternoon session focusing on the churches of the district. Taking groups of several churches at a time, Rev. Mercer gave opportunity for the Brethren to share a few words about the work and needs of each congregation. Then he asked those present to again divide into small groups, with each group praying specifically for one or two of the congregations. This process continued until they had prayed for every church in the district.

Eight of the 22 churches in the



Throughout the Day of Prayer, the Ohio Brethren repeatedly divided into small groups to pray for specific district needs.

Ohio District were represented at the prayer gathering. In a letter to the district churches, Rev. Mercer had also urged Brethren who were unable to attend the gathering at Trinity Church to spend time that day in deliberate prayer for the Ohio District.

— reported by Richard Winfield

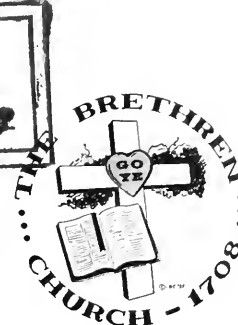
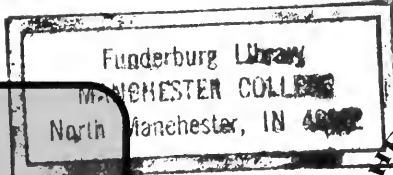
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The Brethren Evangelist



Vol. 122, No. 5

A newsletter for Brethren people

May 2000

Through the Valley

Dear God,

I cry to You in
Sounds that have
No words.
I have no way to
Express my feelings.
All I can do is
Lift my hands and
Cry, "Abba."

You know the desires
Of my heart.
You hear my petitions
That have no voice.
You feel the pain
Of my grief.

Walk with me thru this
"Valley of
The shadow of death."
It is not a physical death.
It is the death of
Dreams, hopes, plans,
And goals.

I surrender my grief
To You.
In that surrender
I find Your peace
And calm.
I rest in stillness
Before You.
Then I am filled with
The joy of knowing You
And Your love.

"Even though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil, for you are
with me; . . ." (Psalm 23:4, *NIV*).

— L. M. Randall

*Ms. Randall is a member of
the First Brethren Church of
Elkhart, Indiana.*

Faith Sharing for Quiet People

By Tammy Darling

BEING SHY by nature, I do not
find it easy to share my faith.
But I've recently discovered there's
more than one way to share my
faith with others, and often it doesn't
even involve using my mouth.

Sharing our faith is one of the
most important aspects of Chris-
tianity. People *need* to hear the
truth that we have already received.
Without it they are truly lost.

With all the suffering and death
that cancer brings, if we had the
cure, would we keep it to ourselves?
No, we would share it—willingly
and immediately. The same concept
applies to witnessing. People all
around us are dying in their sins,
and we know the cure!

You don't have to be Billy Graham
to be a witness, but you do have to
be willing. Even though I'm shy, I
have a sincere desire to reach other
people, and God has faithfully an-
swered my prayers concerning this.
He has opened many doors for me.
Some of them, such as being a free-
lance writer, don't even involve
opening my mouth.

Another "silent" door God has
opened is allowing me to sponsor a
young girl in East India. Through
my monthly letters to her, I am able
to tell her about Christ.

God has also shown me that I can
witness to others simply by the way
I live. Unconditional love and accep-
tance are far more convincing than
mere words. By our actions we earn
the right to be heard.

Seraphim of Sarov is credited
with saying, "Have peace in your
heart, and thousands will be saved
around you." Evangelism doesn't
always take place on a grand scale.
If we plant the seeds, they will grow.

Many times we may never see the
fruit of the seeds we planted, but
we need not be discouraged. James
Strachan once said, "Saving knowl-
edge is diffused over the earth, not
like sunlight but like torchlight,
which is passed from hand to hand."

Find ways to minister to the prac-
tical needs of your non-Christian
friends and neighbors. Become a
good listener, a good helper, and a
hospitable host. Over time they may
ask why you're doing it, and you can
say, "Because I want you to know
that God loves you."

There will be times when we have
to witness orally, and we should be
prepared. Start by sharing how God
has changed your life. If the person
is a relatively new acquaintance,
you can give them a brief "before
and after" overview of your life. Be
willing to get involved in other peo-
ple's lives, and be alert for opportu-
nities to share your faith.

At the start of each day, say this
prayer penned by John Henry New-
man, "Lord, shine in me and so be
in me that all with whom I come in
contact may know thy presence in
my soul. Let them look up and see
no longer me, but only Jesus." [✠]

*Ms. Darling is a free-lance writer
who lives in Three Spring, Pa.*

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*The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue.*



By Charles Arn

One of every five board members should have joined the church within the last two years.

IN A CONVERSATION with the pastor of a church in the Pacific Northwest a few months ago, I asked the question, "How long would I need to be a member of your church before I might be elected to the board?"

He considered my question for a moment and then asked, "Would you attend regularly, give faithfully, and exemplify the Christian life?"

"Yes," I responded.

"Then you would likely be elected to the board of this church sometime between the twelfth and fourteenth year after you joined."

No wonder this church had been in decline for the past generation. It has a terminal illness!

Why include new people?

Why a ratio for new members on the board and in other leadership positions? When new members serve in church leadership roles,

**This is the third in a series of articles by Dr. Charles Arn on "Ratios for Growing Churches." The first article appeared in the February issue (p. 1) and the second in the April issue (p. 3).*

they bring unique and important contributions to the table:

- New members are optimistic about the pastor. They support his leadership, enjoy his preaching, and deeply respect the opinions of clerical leadership in their new church. By contrast, if there is any discontent with the present pastor, it almost invariably comes from long-time members.
- New members are optimistic about the potential of the church. These men and women joined not because they believed their new church would die, but because they believed it would meet their needs—and meet the needs of others. They tend to be future-oriented and see great possibilities for new ministry and growth.
- New members are open to innovation and new ideas. If realizing future possibilities in the church requires change in the present, new members will vote "yes" almost every time. By contrast, long-time members often tend to be more past-oriented and more committed to perpetuating the status quo.
- New members are not as attached to the present location or facilities. Sometimes change means renovation of facilities or even moving to a new location.

Newcomers are far more likely to support such a change than are long-term members (particularly if the present facility has been built through significant family contributions).

When new members serve on boards and committees, they bring fresh and exciting new ideas; they bring vitality; they bring enthusiasm about the future; and they are ready to get involved. New members want to see their church grow and change the lives of people in the same way their own lives have been changed.

"Old guard" resistance

Unfortunately, too often power in the church is closely protected by the "old guard." Newcomers are seen as liabilities rather than as assets. Their ideas are dismissed as inappropriate or ill-conceived. They are excluded from informal decision-making conversations, and their new ideas never get a serious hearing.

Set a goal of one of every five leaders being new members—and then listen to what these folks have to say. You will see good things happen every time! [✚]

*Dr. Arn is president of Church Growth, Inc., Monrovia, Calif. His latest book is **How to Start a New Worship Service** (Baker Books).*

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Pontius' Pilgrimage



For an entirely different impression of the Holy Land, see pages 7 & 8.

The Conrads:

From Indianapolis to Alaska

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED what happened to Tom and Tiona Conrad, who served for several years as church planters with Winning the Race Ministries in Greenwood, Indiana, near Indianapolis? Would you believe that they are now serving the Lord among the Eskimos of Alaska?

When Tom and Tiona resigned from Winning the Race Ministries, they looked at opportunities for service both inside and outside The Brethren Church. Then came an invitation to candidate at a church in Dillingham, a town in the bush country of western Alaska. So April 1999 found them on a flight to Alaska to visit this congregation.

An answer to prayer

When they arrived, they discovered that the members of this church had been praying for several years for a pastor to come and guide them into becoming a cell-model church—the very kind of training that Tom had received for his work in Greenwood. Even so, the Conrads spent much time in prayer and fasting before they realized that God was indeed calling them to relocate to the bush of Alaska.

Dillingham is a major center for Yupik Eskimos. The town is surrounded by more than 30 Yupik villages, over half of which have no church. Tom pastors an Alaskan Moravian congregation. It is the only English-speaking congregation in the Alaskan Moravian Church. All the rest speak Yupik.



God has been doing a wonderful work since the Conrads began serving in Dillingham last June. More than 30 people have come to Christ since the Conrads arrived. In addition, the church is in the process of becoming a cell-model congregation, and it is in the planning stages of using cells to plant churches in several other villages. The church is

Prayer for General Conference

The Congregational Ministries Council has recommended that each Brethren church designate special times of prayer during the next three months for this year's General Conference. Below are some suggested topics. Please add your own concerns to this list as well.

May — Pray for the **Conference speakers**, that God will give them the words to say and that they will speak according to His will. Pray that God will provide spiritual food that will bring renewal and that the Spirit will prepare the hearts of the Brethren to hear these messages.

June — Pray that the **business ses-**

sions of this Conference will be conducted according to God's will and that Brethren will be sensitive to the Lord's leading so that we can minister to a lost and hurting world. Our prayer should not be, "Lord, bless what we are doing," but rather, "Lord, let us be a part of what You are blessing."

July — Pray that God will place His hand of protection on **all who travel** to this Conference. Pray also that those who travel will be His witnesses as they encounter new people and new ministry fields while away from their homes and churches.

Let us pray daily that God will truly **"Renew Our Spirits"** and transform us by means of this Conference. [✠]

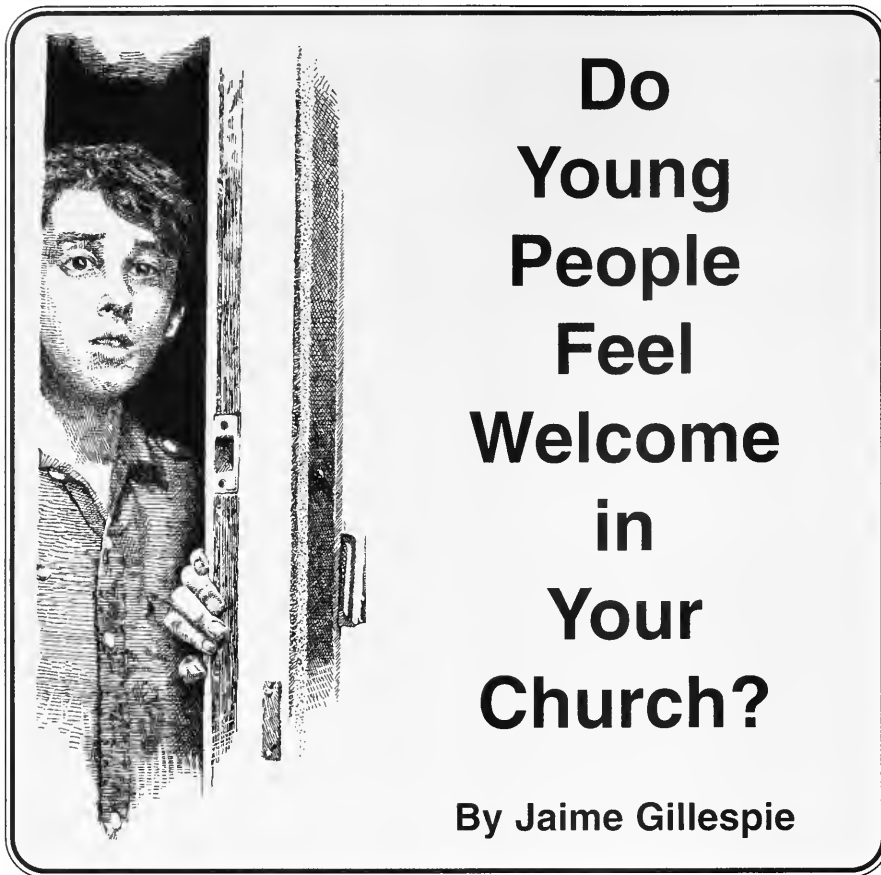
also expanding its ministry by starting a Christian school for the native youth and by becoming a training center for discipleship.

Word has gotten out about all that is happening at Dillingham, and Tom has received numerous calls from native Alaskans for training and equipping. Five years ago a native mission agency called Chukotka Native Christian Ministry (CNCM) was started in order to plant churches among the Yupik in northern Russia. The Dillingham Church will train and equip CNCM missionaries to plant cell churches. In fact, the Dillingham Church is working with five other native ministries, helping to train people for outreach and church planting. The church is also helping to translate the Old Testament into Yupik. The congregation is even drawing up plans to send church-planting teams from Alaska into the Pacific Basin.

An expression of thanks

The Conrads are very thankful to The Brethren Church for all the training they received through their work with Winning the Race Ministries. They now look upon themselves as an extension of The Brethren Church to Native Americans in Alaska. One way they desire to express their thanks is by putting together a fully-financed team of native Alaskans to go to one of the Brethren mission fields and offer a two-week evangelistic outreach in the area. They also hope that Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) can put together a ministry team that will travel to Alaska in the summer of 2001 to host vacation Bible schools in several unchurched Yupik villages.

Tom notes one last blessing from their work in Alaska. Les Brikman, one of the trainers from TOUCH Outreach Ministries, has taken materials developed by Winning the Race Ministries and has had them translated into the Russian language. Many Russian church planters are being assisted by these materials. TOUCH Outreach also uses some of the Winning the Race Ministries materials in English to train pastors in the United States. Thus Brethren efforts continue to impact the world by building up the Kingdom of God. [✠]



Do Young People Feel Welcome in Your Church?

By Jaime Gillespie

IS YOUR CHURCH "youth-friendly"? Do the young people in your church feel that they are welcomed into the fellowship of the body and that they are viewed as an important, integral part of the congregation? Research has shown time and time again that more than two-thirds of all Christians decide to follow Christ before they reach age 18. So what is your church doing to reach this age group?

Jill's story

Let me tell you about Jill. Jill is a 10th-grade student and an active participant in every youth event her church offers. She is a leader at school, a great example to her peers, and passionate in her relationship with the Lord. But Jill is not happy. She's not happy because she doesn't feel that she's a part of her church. She goes every Sunday, listens to her Sunday school teacher, sits with her family for the worship service, sings the hymns, listens to the sermon, and goes home feeling that she didn't gain anything from her worship experience.

Bill's story

Now let me introduce Bill. Bill is also in the 10th grade; he is active in his church's youth ministry; and he is a leader at school. But Bill is happy. He's happy because he feels that he is an integral part of his church. He goes every Sunday, teaches a pre-school Sunday school class, sits with friends from his small group in the worship service, plays the guitar in the worship band, helps with the children's sermon, and goes home feeling excited about his relationship with God.

What is the difference between these two very typical high school students? Bill goes to a church that is "youth-friendly," while Jill goes to a church that is "youth-bland." Her church loves young people and doesn't do anything to scare them off, but it also doesn't make them feel accepted and needed.

So how can we tell if our churches are youth friendly, or if our young people are feeling unconnected to the church? In an article in *GROUP* magazine (March/April 1999), Rick

Lawrence identifies seven signs that are common to youth-friendly congregations. Let's look at how our churches rate.

Number 1: Teenagers have significant responsibilities in the church

Even though they are young, many youth are able and willing to take on responsible roles in the church. How can your church include youth? Here are some ideas:

- allow them to teach Sunday school classes for younger children
- let youth serve as greeters and ushers
- ask a teenager to give the children's sermon
- use talented youth in your praise band or choir
- allow trained youth to work in the nursery
- use the youth group to help with office work or to clean up the church
- ask youth to hand out materials in the community inviting people to your church
- allow young people to give their testimony during worship services
- ask one of the older youth to give the message one Sunday
- let the high school youth plan an event for younger children

There are no limits to the things youth can do in your church! Allow them to learn from the experienced people already doing things, and prepare them to lead our churches in the coming years.

Number 2: The church supports its youth ministry with finances and staff positions

Experts will often examine your checkbook and your calendar to find out what is most important to you. In the same way, we can examine the checkbook of our church to see if our youth are a priority. Churches that are youth-friendly reflect this in their budgets.

Most youth groups in our denomination have to do fund-raisers for *everything*! Do the youth in your church have to raise all their own money to come to Convention? If so, do the adults also have to do fund-raisers to pay their delegate fees? Churches that are youth-friendly help support their youth with budgeted money, even if the youth still

do fund-raisers for big events. Even a small line item in a budget lets the youth know that they are important to the congregation.

Youth-friendly churches also realize that the youth deserve qualified leaders. Therefore they support the youth ministry with staff. Of the approximately 120 Brethren churches in the United States, only 18 have paid staff persons who focus even part of their time on youth ministry.

Even if your church can't afford a youth pastor, provide your youth qualified volunteer leaders. Choose youth leaders who have heard God's call to this special ministry and who are gifted at working with young people. And before allowing anyone to work with the children or youth in your church, do a background check. Your state police or local FBI can help with this.

Send volunteers to youth advisor training, make sure they have curriculum ideas and resources, and support them with prayer and encouragement. Your youth deserve to be safe and to have leaders with the heart and the training to lead them.

Number 3: Youth are integrated into the life of the whole church, not just into the youth group

Teach your youth that relationships with people of all ages are important, and help them develop connections with everyone in your church. Plan events that include people of all ages. Allow your youth to be involved in the planning and decision-making that happens in your church. Have a youth member on all boards and committees. This way you'll know if what is being planned will appeal to the youth.

Number 4: The church has a vision statement for youth ministry and communicates it often and well

Mission, vision, and purpose are important to the life of any ministry. They tell why your ministry exists and what you hope to accomplish. If your youth ministry has a purpose

statement, use it! Make sure everything you do is filtered through that statement and fulfills its purpose. If



“Research has shown time and time again that more than two-thirds of all Christians decide to follow Christ before they reach age 18. So what is your church doing to reach this age group?”

your youth ministry doesn't have a purpose statement, prayerfully consider creating one. And let the youth help! If you are not sure how to create one, contact the National Office and we will gladly help you.

Number 5: Young people enjoy long-term, home-grown youth ministry leadership

A recent survey found that the majority of successful youth ministries had long-term youth leaders who were born and raised in the church. They were once members of the youth ministry and have now “grown up” to become its leaders. These people know the church and its people and the strengths and weaknesses of the youth ministry. They are usually excited about keeping the youth ministry alive and thriving! On the other hand, don't discount newcomers to your church, for they often bring new, creative ideas and fresh perspectives.

Number 6: The church has an outreach mentality and a youth-welcoming reputation

Outreach is something that should happen every day, not just on special

occasions. Stress to your youth and to your church that everything they do—shopping, playing sports, working, going to school, *whatever* they do—is an opportunity to introduce people to Christ and to your church. Make people feel welcome when they come to your church. Have adults and youth ready to connect with these people from the second they walk through the door until they leave. Sit with new people during the service, introduce them to people with similar interests, and show a genuine interest in them. If your church members are in the habit of welcoming new people, they will automatically welcome new youth (even youth with blue hair and baggy pants!).

Number 7: Church leaders plan the main worship service with all ages in mind

Many churches are struggling with the atmosphere of the main worship service. Some people want to keep the organ and the hymns, while others want guitars and choruses. Youth usually lean heavily to the contemporary side, and often complain about how boring traditional worship services are. God calls us all *to worship*—that is the principle. So why squabble over *how* we practice worship? Let's try integrating a little bit of everything: a praise team that sings both traditional hymns and contemporary choruses, the organ for some songs, and guitars for others. And let's keep all ages in mind when planning the sermons. Let's make sure that all who attend the service leave feeling that they have experienced God, not that they had a good nap!

Since **May is Youth Month**, take time this month to evaluate your congregation using these seven characteristics of a youth-friendly church. How does it rate? Celebrate your strengths and work at eliminating your weaknesses! [†]

Ms. Gillespie is National Youth Leader for The Brethren Church, a full-time position at the National Office in Ashland, Ohio.

Ministerial Student Aid: A Critical Need

By Robert Keplinger and Richard Winfield

PREPARING for ministerial service as a pastor in The Brethren Church is a long and expensive process. For most future pastors, it involves four years in college and at least three years in seminary.

To help meet the financial needs of ministerial students, the National Brethren Ministerial Association (now the National Association of Brethren Church Elders) many years ago formed a Ministerial Student Aid Fund Committee. The purpose of this committee was to make Brethren churches aware of the need for funds for ministerial students and to receive and disburse those funds.

For many years the main use of these funds was to provide scholarships to Brethren pastoral students at Ashland Theological Seminary. But in recent years that has changed. Ashland Theological Seminary now provides full-tuition scholarships to Brethren students at the seminary preparing for pastoral ministry.

Meeting other needs

When the seminary began doing this, it appeared for a short time that the Ministerial Student Aid Fund was no longer needed. But as the committee looked around, it discovered other significant needs. One of these was the expensive books that seminary students must purchase for their classes. So the Ministerial Student Aid Fund Committee began helping Brethren seminary students pay for these books.

Another need was the cost of special courses required of some pastors who are already in ministry. The National Ordination Council requires all pastors seeking ordination in The Brethren Church to take courses in Brethren polity, history, and doctrine. Brethren students who attend Ashland Theological Seminary take these courses while at the seminary. But pastors who have not attended the seminary or who have come into The Brethren

Church from other denominations have not had these courses.

To meet their need, the seminary offers special classes (usually in the summer) in these subjects. But since most Brethren pastors do not have extra money to pay for such classes, the Ministerial Student Aid Fund Committee covers some of the costs.

In addition to the above, the Ministerial Student Aid Fund Committee also provides some scholarship money to Brethren college students who are preparing to go to seminary. Since the greatest cost of preparing for pastoral ministry is the college expense, this also is very important.

A dramatic increase

The number of Brethren students at Ashland Theological Seminary has increased dramatically in recent years and now stands at 36. The

Ministerial Student Aid Fund Committee is pleased to be able to help meet their financial needs.

This will soon change, however, unless more funds become available very quickly. And that depends on the response of Brethren churches.

The General Conference has set the "Fair Share" for Brethren support of the Ministerial Student Aid Fund at \$3.00 per Church Growth Index. If every Brethren church would provide its share, there would be enough money.

This becomes a very critical matter when we consider the future of The Brethren Church. If we stop supporting our Brethren seminary students, we endanger the growth which is starting to take place.

Please pray about this matter. Talk to your church boards. And consider making a special gift yourself to the Ministerial Student Aid Fund of The Brethren Church. (Send to The Brethren Church National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.) [✠]

Rev. Keplinger, a retired Brethren pastor, is treasurer of the Ministerial Student Aid Fund Committee. Rev. Winfield is editor of the EVANGELIST.



Urgent need for Brethren Mission in India: New regulations in Rajahmundry, India, have made it necessary to build a sanitation system at the boys' orphanage. The building cannot be fully used as either an orphanage or Bible institute until the work is completed. This expense was not anticipated in the Brethren Mission in India budget. Brethren Missionary Ministries needs to raise \$7,500 to cover the cost of the sanitation system and the remodeling made necessary because of its installation. If you, your church, or a group in your church (Sunday school class, W.M.S. group, etc.) would like to help, please contact Rev. Reilly Smith or Mrs. Ginny Hoyt at The Brethren Church National Office (419-289-1708).

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



May-June 2000

Volume 13, Number 5

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies:

I am writing to you this morning on a cold, snowy, and windy March day. By the time this reaches you, the weather should be sunny and balmy. How we all look forward to those days!

The changing of the seasons has always fascinated me. I've been intrigued by noting how God constantly gives us little hints that He is still in control of everything. He even gives us brief glimpses of things to come.

The other day I was surprised to look out my front window and see a whole clump of daffodils in full bloom. Their sunny blossoms were like bright little faces bravely facing the hostile elements. My active imagination saw them shivering in the cold!

That sight made me think about how we as God's children are facing hostility and coldness of the world. Sometimes, as we try to live for Him, we feel so alone. We may even wonder why He has put us here on earth!

When we get these feelings, it is time for us to stop, look around, look up, and trust in God's love for us. Just as He warms the earth so the flowers can bloom, He will send His rays of hope into our lives and we will see that He hasn't moved—He has been there all the time upholding us. This gives us comfort and we can begin to bloom for Him.

Now that I have preached "that sermon" for today, I want to share
(continued on page 2)

BUT G R O W!

Beware lest ye fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. II Peter 3:18

When we were little girls, we learned the childish rhyme:

"Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?"

Years later we learned the Bible verse above.

Throughout the intervening years we measured our physical growth, or we were measured, to make sure our physical growth conformed to the charts. And later, do you remember being measured against the wall? Now we are less concerned with physical growth.

In the spring we are interested in garden growth—vegetables, flowers, herbs, and unusual plants. In Dorman's garden I like to have

Green beans and gourds
Radishes and red beets
Onions, but no
Weeds!

That is only a silly acrostic, because he plants other vegetables, too. But something that is not so silly is the spiritual acrostic of GROW.

In Simon Peter's Second Epistle he warns the reader to beware of scoffers and false teachers; in the NIV they are called "lawless men." Peter writes, "Since you already know this . . . beware lest ye also fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (3:17-18).

I know when the short word "but" appears in conversation, the converse is expected. We often say, "Don't do this, but do that" or "I would like to go, but . . ." So Peter's warning is, Don't associate with the false teachers, "but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Grace, by itself, is hard to define, but, according to a biblical note, grace is connected with continual Christian growth so we know Him through (1) prayer, (2) service, and (3) with giving. This we can understand and practice.

Righteous — knowing and practicing the standards of right and wrong; living the believing and faithful life because of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

Offerings — under the Old Testament law animal sacrifices were required, but Jesus Christ became the ultimate sacrifice through His death on the cross. Dead animal sacrifices are no longer required, but we offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God. We give our life to Him! Every day! This is necessary because we are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in us (I Corinthians 3:16).

Word — the Word is Jesus Christ (John 1:1). The text above encourages us to "grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and we do this through studying and listening to His Word and through prayer. We are not told to grow in just any kind of knowledge, but **in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

I drafted these thoughts over a period of several days. And then I read Max Lucado's book, *When God Whispers Your Name*. Much to my surprise and delight, he writes about four habits which contribute to growth. The first two are prayer and study. I am glad to agree with someone so important!

His book is one of our reading books. I suggest that you read pages
(continued on page 2)

District Doings

The INDIANA district ladies served in many ways last year. These are examples:



Roanoke: financially supported Shippshewana, Maria Miranda's radio ministry, world missions, and the church's Kids' Club

Huntington: honored the youth on a special Sunday, sent school supplies and clothes to Kentucky

Nappanee: financially supported the Elkhart County jail chaplain, John Maust and Randy Best (missionaries from the Nappanee congregation), and contributed to the youth mission trip to Washington, D.C.

Bryan I: sponsored garage sales with proceeds designated for missions

Peru: sent stuffed animals to Mark and Chantal Logan, labels and personal articles for the staff at Riverside Christian School, purchased flags for Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship in Peru

North Manchester Joy: each member mentors a fifth- or sixth-grade girl—praying and helping each one in her spiritual growth. They chose Brethren Care as a service project and sent bibs, printed sheets and pillowcases, and personal items

Goshen Regina: sent 13 new Bibles and other supplies for the Riverside School

North Manchester Hadassah: Contributed monthly support during basketball season to the Fifth Quarter, a social gathering for young people after the basketball games

Dutchtown: made comforters and lap robes for area nursing homes and financially supported Riverside School each month

Tiosa: sent monthly remembrances to a girl in college, packages of colored marking pens to Riverside School, empty pill bottles for medicine to Haiti, and painted walls at Eagle's Nest

Wabash: supported the local Santa Workshop and local Christian education classes in the public schools, sent gifts to a children's

nursing home for handicapped children, purchased a sewing machine for the Kumars' ministry, and contributed financially to the Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship and for kids attending Shippshewana camp

New Paris: supported an Indian orphan monthly, gave a love offering to Lost Creek, and provided snacks for youth meetings

Cornerstone: raised money for World Relief by selling calendars

Milford: sponsored Avon sales, made and sold wooden Christmas trees, held a silent auction of home-made items for their thank offering; and for World Relief the members contributed the amount of money if they had taken a friend to lunch. That idea netted \$110.00!

Roann: sponsored their annual auction in October

Meadow Crest: helped with scholarships, collected clothes, food, and gifts at Thanksgiving and Christmas

College Corner: sent financial gifts to the Mirandas, Eagle's Nest, and Shippshewana Camp, gave three new Bibles to non-Christian children

North Manchester Circle of Friends: prepared and served at the local soup kitchen, and sent gifts to the Riverside Christian School staff

Warsaw: collected aluminum cans and donated the money to missions, sent Christmas gifts to Riverside School

These are good ideas. Maybe you have picked up a new idea for your society!

BUT G R O W! *(continued)*

135-140 to gain insight to the other habits we should cultivate as well as to see why these important practices are necessary for spiritual growth.

Another important author, Robert Browning, questioned, "Why stay on the earth except to grow?"

Therefore, as long as we are here and growing, we need to be the best we can. We need to cultivate our knowledge of **Grace, Righteousness, Offerings, and God's Word**, so we are deeply rooted and can escape from false teachers and scoffers. They are weeds planted by Satan!

Joan

The President's Pen *(continued)*
some of the things we have been doing and how we have fit into God's important plans.

Since we have retired, my husband, Don, has been asked to have a ministry to the senior citizens, known as Senior Saints, in our congregation. He makes many calls on the sick, shut-ins, and elderly who are in their own homes, nursing homes, and hospitals. Once a month those who are able join in a special activity which is usually at the church.

We plan a special meal, furnishing the meat, potatoes, and rolls. Everyone contributes a "covered dish." The array of food is truly amazing! They bring such goodies as old fashioned sugar cream pie, homemade tapioca pudding, whoopie pies, homemade cakes, and yummy salads—you get the picture! There is almost enough food to feed the entire congregation.

Following the meal we sometimes play games, have entertainment such as the singers and harmonica players from Greencroft Retirement Center. One day we had a show-and-tell time and the people shared their hobbies and crafts.

We have taken some field trips, too. One day we went to Shippshewana, ate at the Blue Gate Restaurant, and then learned some Anabaptist history at Menno-Hof. Another time we ate at a favorite restaurant in Topeka, Indiana, visited an Amish country store and one of the most beautiful antique shops in the area. We also went to Fernwood Gardens in Michigan.

Last fall we enjoyed a Threshers' Dinner at Amish Acres in Nappanee *(continued on page 4)*

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman (Joan) Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

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Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

Women's Outlook Newsletter

See this!



Hi Ladies,

What a pleasure to write to you all! Joan asked me to share a little in regard to our upcoming time together at General Conference in Estes Park. Before I tell you of our plans, I would like to encourage you to be there!

Time together at Conference offers a special opportunity for spiritual renewal and physical refreshment. It's a time to be encouraged; then go "back home" to share what we've seen and heard and, in turn, to encourage others in their walk with the Lord.

If you cannot be with your W.M.S. sisters at Conference, please be sure to pray for those who go, for their safety in travel, and for their spirits to be renewed in Christ.

On Tuesday morning of Conference (August 8), National W.M.S. will convene to conduct our yearly business. Our time together this year is limited, so the national officers will streamline the session as much as possible.

We encourage you to bring your Thank and Project Offerings to General Conference, as we will have a Time of Ingathering at our session. A reminder here: do make all checks payable to National W.M.S. and, if no one from your society is attending Conference, please send these national offerings to Joanne Kroft (refer to page 46 of your *Devotional Guide* for her address).

We have one special request of all societies: As you return your statistical report in June, please include the names of those from your society who have passed away in the last year and a few lines about each one. Instead of conducting a memorial service as we have in the past, we will print a memorial booklet that will include each name and a brief written memory.

Other changes for this year are that we will not have our luncheon as usual nor will we have greetings from our missionaries at our sessions. However, most of our missionaries will attend Conference, so we encourage you to make it a point

to meet and talk with them sometime during the week.

If you or your society would wish to write them notes of greeting and encouragement, I will be happy to receive them and pass them on at Conference. My address is 776 E. 830 S., Bunker Hill, IN 46914. Please send all notes by the end of July.

If you should have any questions in regard to W.M.S. Conference 2000, please call me (765-689-9728) or drop me an e-mail message (eoburn@comteck.com) and I will try to help you.

I look forward to seeing you at Estes Park! I pray for God's blessing on each of you and your societies as you serve in His name.

Lovingly,

DeAnn Oburn

National W.M.S. Vice President



GOOD NEWS!

"Dear Joan,

"There's exciting news from Trinity Brethren Church in Canton, Ohio. We now have THREE W.M.S. organizations!

"The first one is the Sr. W.M.S. It has been organized for many years. The second one is the Jrettes. We are the middle Srs. It, too, has been organized for a long time. The third one is known as Hearts for Ministry. This one is comprised of the younger women in God's church.

"As always we are all committed to do God's work. We all support our youth and the missionaries far [away] and at home.

"We ask for prayers from all of you that we can fulfill God's Purpose in our lives. The president of Hearts for Ministry is Geneva Price.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Dixon

President, W.M.S. Jrettes"

In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

Lucille Woessner of Milledgeville passed away October 1, 1999. During her long and fruitful life, she taught in the elementary school, served two different terms as a missionary in Lost Creek, Kentucky, and, more recently, tutored children in her home. She was an effective prayer warrior; she faithfully and generously served the Lord in many ways. She had a special gift of hospitality, made quilts, and wrote poetry, some of which was used for her memorial service. For two consecutive years she contributed to the W.M.S. *Devotional Guide* with her fun program ideas and recipes. She was a dear sister in the Lord and is sadly missed by all who were privileged to know her.

Thanks!

Dear Ladies of the W.M.S.

I am writing to thank you for the scholarship money you have generously given to me. I am truly grateful to receive such generosity. With your help I was able to complete my years at Ashland University. I will graduate in May with a Bachelor of Science degree.

I majored in English and minored in psychology. My plans as of now are uncertain. Law school is one possibility. I may also go on to graduate school to pursue a career in community counseling.

Again, I would like to thank all of you for your much-needed support. I have been blessed to receive such a wonderful gift that allowed me to further my education. Thank you so very much.

Sincerely,
Christy Bechtel

Christy is an active member of the Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland. Senior ladies who are enrolled at Ashland University and who are members of The Brethren Church are considered for the W.M.S. scholarship.

Missionary Miscellany

As DeAnn wrote, many missionaries will attend General Conference. We anticipate visiting with these:

Jen Thomas, Todd and Tracy Ruggles and Johnathan (Mexico City)

Claudio and Karina Castelli (Paraguay)

Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri (Colombia)

Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar and their daughter, Sunita (India)

David and Jenny Loi (Malaysia),

Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez (Argentina)

José Rivero (Argentina)

And maybe Miguel and Sonia Antunez (Peru).

In addition will be the international students at Ashland Theological Seminary: Marcela Rivero and Monica Santiago (Argentina) and Vincent and Shanti Edwin (India).

And there is more: a worship team from Argentina will lead in one worship service.

It will be an international event! Support them with your prayers for safety and good health. And remember those who remain at home to continue the work.

Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar in India and David and Jenny Loi in Malaysia are the May missionaries-of-the-month.

The Florida church planters are the June missionaries-of-the-month. Instead of Daniel and Kathy Rosales, the planters, pray for Italo and Rebecca Abuid, who are now the pastor and wife of the Iglesia de los Hermanos in Sarasota. The Rosales are serving in full-time evangelism and radio ministry in Mexico and South America.

Keep up-to-date with the missionaries' birthdays by referring frequently to pages 47-48 in the *Devotional Guide*.



The President's Pen (continued)

and attended a performance of "Annie, Get Your Gun" at the Round Barn Theater. Our group was invited by the Keen Agers of the North Manchester Church to enjoy a musical program and refreshments with them.

We are planning more trips this year, including attending the Passion Play in Syracuse, Indiana, before Easter. People are excited about this performance, since some friends from the church are in the cast. We are looking forward, too, to a one-day bus trip to Holland, Michigan, to the Tulip Festival.

One of the bonuses of such a program is that some of our Seniors have invited their friends who attend churches that do not have such ministries. We have made new friends, and they look forward to the monthly activity as much as we do.

I have learned some real lessons as a result of this ministry. First and foremost is that everyone, young or old, is important in the eyes of God. Just because a person is older and unable to do as much as he or she did at one time, there is still much to contribute. Many of the seniors I know tell stories that are interesting and exciting; they have a wonderful sense of humor, and their ideas are unique.

Too often today older adults are "put on the shelf" and ignored. Maybe it's because I have reached those "golden years" myself that my perception of older folks has made a 360 degree turn! Seniors have so much to offer; they should be listened to and their advice heeded. Many of them are really looking forward to going to their heavenly home.

The Lord has blessed this ministry, and we have been blessed as well. Won't you do something for an older adult? You will be blessed!

It won't be long until we will be traveling to Colorado for General Conference. Some information is included in this *Newsletter*. Plan to join us for a week of inspiration, business, fellowship, and outstanding scenery.

God bless!

Charlene
Charlene

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

We've never done it this way before! I am referring to General Conference in Estes Park, so come with great expectations. I anticipate Bible studies, worship time, and business in a beautiful and relaxed community. Please come and enjoy it with us.

DeAnn has written of the abbreviated schedule. The program will be very worthwhile and concise. We will have many opportunities to visit with the missionaries and to learn specific things we can do to support them more.

May and June are celebration months! The National Day of Prayer is May 4. I hope you participate in your community or church activities. Following soon is Mother's Day. Be thankful for your mother. Perhaps she is no longer living to hear your sentiments, but she gave you life. Not everyone is a mother, but everyone had a mother. Be thankful for who you are.

Father's Day and Graduations are other wonderful times for celebrations! Pray for dads, children, and youth. They all face many tough challenges and decisions; help them with your prayers. Be an example or a mentor to the youth. And weddings! Young couples need our love and God's blessings! I hope you enjoy these happy times.

The W.M.S. Board will meet May 26 to confirm specific Conference details. Should you have any comments or suggestions for the Board to consider, please contact your district president.

The conclusion of the W.M.S. year is soon. Check your commitments to make sure your reading books are shared, your personal devotions are regular, and your offerings will be brought or sent to General Conference. And then return the statistical report to Nancy Hunn, Nappanee, Ind., in June.

These are several last-minute reminders, tie the string around your finger, and serve!

Your friend,

Joan
Joan

An "Affair of the Heart" in Israel

by Mesu Andrews



EARLIER THIS YEAR, 21 people from the Nappanee First Brethren Church had the wonderful privilege of visiting Israel. For many of us the "journey" actually began months earlier in a discipleship class at our church. In this class—a video study called *That the World May Know*—the leader taught the archaeology of Israel in such a way that we could see the current ruins as lessons learned years ago that still have relevance for our lives today. Our hearts were so touched in this class that we felt compelled to see the Holy Land.

Members of the class approached Senior Pastor Ken Hunn and Associate Pastor Roy Andrews and asked about the possibility of their taking a group to Israel. In fact, the class offered to send both pastors and their wives for free if the pastors would do the planning and pastoring for the event.

The day of departure

After lots of prayers and fund-raisers, the day of our departure finally came: Tuesday, February 21, 2000! The 21 travelers from our church were joined by 13 more from 10 other churches. Our pastors were destined to learn what it is really like to "herd sheep."

We flew first to Munich, where we spent a day touring, then on to Tel Aviv. There we met our guide, Meir, and our bus driver, Nuriel, who would be our constant companions and become our "best friends" during the next week! They took us from Tel Aviv to Netanya, where we spent the night in a hotel. At that point any stationary, flat surface would

have been fine for the night's sleep. We awoke the next morning to the sound of the Mediterranean sea. What a beautiful morning God gave us!

Changes in my heart

If I tried to tell you all we saw and experienced, this entire newsletter would not have room for the words that would be written, to paraphrase the words of the Apostle in John 21:25. So instead, I hope to share with you not just the archaeology or the history of the places I saw while on this trip, but the changes that took place in my heart.

The Lord gave us a unique individual to guide us through the Holy Land. Meir, in his early 50s, is a fifth-generation Jerusalem-born Jew. He spent his early years in the Israeli army as a tank commander, a position he still holds in the Israeli reserves. He pursued an education in archaeology and helped in some of the excavations that we saw. But by

far the most impressive thing about him was his love of God. He is Jewish to the core, but he recognizes and respects the truth that our Christian roots were planted in the same soil.

We had the rare opportunity to visit an area of the Golan Heights that many tourists don't see because of the political tension. We passed by mine fields and saw evidence of military conflict over this land. We arrived in Caesarea Philippi, where we saw many signs of ancient pagan worship. Meir reminded us that Jesus brought His disciples here to ask them, "Who do people say that I am?" It was here, in the midst of a pagan culture, that Peter made his confession of Jesus as the Christ (Matt. 16:13ff). Oh, how easy it would have been for Peter to be distracted by all that surrounded him. Oh, how easily I am distracted by my own culture.

A source of "living water"

The land on which we stood is the very land that is the subject of current peace talks. Meir told us Israel's reason for wanting to keep this land. The waters of Mt. Hermon and two other tributaries rush down to this beautiful, fertile land and create the upper Jordan River. The Jordan River supplies the Sea of Galilee, which is the only source of fresh water for the entire nation of Israel. To give up control of this land would be to hand over the very life of the people. This gave new meaning to the words "living water."

(continued on next page)



Rev. Ken Hunn, pastor of the Nappanee First Brethren Church, leads the tour group in devotions at the Mt. of Beatitudes.

In 1967 during the six-days war, Meir fought for this land and was injured twice in battle. Because of his story, this territory became more to us than a place on a map. We began to fall in love with God's chosen people and their Promised Land.

A message of simplicity

As we toured the sites around the Sea of Galilee, I received the same message at each site, "simplicity." Jesus began and conducted most of His ministry in the area around Capernaum. Excavations there found unhewn stones as the building blocks of the city. Meir pointed out that these unhewn stones were signs of simple, hard-working people, more fisherman than architect. Yet it was with these simple people that Jesus chose to build his earthly ministry.

The architect for the Catholic church on the Mt. of Beatitudes also had simplicity in mind. Antonio Bernucci put meaning into the design of this church: eight sides to represent the eight beatitudes; a simple, yet beautiful, altar to represent the simple joy of serving Jesus. Pastor Ken reminded us to search out the simple beauty in our lives and to turn from all the distractions this world offers. I could describe the beauty of the Mt. of Beatitudes as "breath-taking," but we saw so many "breath-taking" views that it would sound as though we were out of breath for the whole trip!

Jesus Day: June 10

ON SATURDAY, June 10, millions of people in communities around the world will take the joy of knowing Jesus beyond the church walls in a celebration called *Jesus Day*. The vision of *Jesus Day* is to have "a day on earth as it is in heaven"—a day when no one goes hungry, no child is fatherless, no one suffers alone, and the streets are filled with singing.

Churches across our nation will celebrate *Jesus Day* in special ways. Some are planning evangelism or ministry events with a celebratory atmosphere. Some will be feeding the hungry, serving the homeless, helping AIDS patients, befriending the fatherless, and bringing joy through song as they demonstrate

We would soon leave the lush green area of Galilee to make our way to Jerusalem—just as Jesus did when He left this precious area to go to His death. As we drove south to the city, the terrain became more and more rocky, less and less fertile. Tears began to flow as I thought how Jesus' heart must have ached for the beauty and serenity of Galilee as He traveled through this Judean wilderness on the way to His death in Jerusalem.

Just as my heart was about to break, our guide drew our attention to the front of the bus. "It was an ancient custom for the people of Jerusalem to welcome their guests with bread and salt," he said. "Today I don't have any bread or salt to give you, but I welcome you to my golden city." At that moment, the city of Jerusalem came into view, and Meir played a song entitled "Jerusalem." My heart was lifted to enjoy the beauty and significance of this magnificent city!

A new understanding

I've heard it said that the commercialism in Jerusalem is distracting and offensive. I've also heard people say that they found the soldiers walking down the streets with

the love of Jesus Christ by caring for those in need.

But *Jesus Day* is not just church events. It is about millions of people demonstrating their faith in positive and practical ways. So you can take part even if your church plans no special activities. You can be part of *Jesus Day* by helping a neighbor, by visiting someone in a nursing home, by showing kindness to the children in your neighborhood, or by demonstrating the values of Jesus in whatever you do.

For more information about *Jesus Day* and for other ideas for observing this occasion, see the *Jesus Day* web site at www.jesusday.org.

Let us join with other Christians in honoring Jesus by celebrating this special day. [✚]



Mesu Andrews, who wrote this article, with two Israeli soldiers—young men doing their military service.

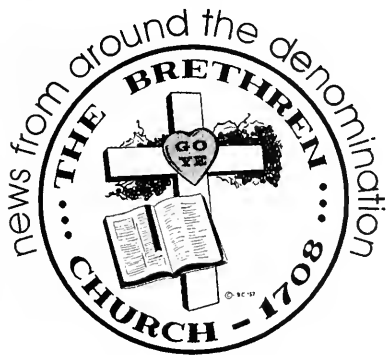
guns frightening. If I look at this city and its people through my own eyes, both of those things may be true. But if I look at them with the mind of Christ, it is life as usual in the Middle East.

The great-great-great . . . grandparents of the merchants along the Via Dolorosa were probably there when Jesus carried His cross. The Catholic churches built over almost every holy site took on great meaning, as Meir taught us not only about the sites but also about the reasons each church was built in a particular design. I even came to see the soldiers wearing guns as young men and women going through one of the steps to maturity, since every young person in Israel goes into military service after high school.

Dr. Delbert and Romaine Flora, who lived and worked in Israel for a time, taught me something vitally important while my husband Roy was in seminary. Dr. Flora said to me, "You cannot understand the true meaning of scripture unless you read it with the Middle-Eastern mind." I now understand and affirm that comment.

Today I have a love and respect for the land of Israel that I never dreamed possible. My heart aches to return to that precious land and further explore my Jewish roots. We will begin planning for our next tour soon. We already know who our guide will be! Would you like to come along? [✚]

Mrs. Andrews is a member of the Nappanee First Brethren Church, where her husband, Roy, is Associate Pastor



A ministry opportunity

Brethren Inner City Ministries of Indianapolis, Indiana, is seeking Christ-centered persons to join the leadership team of this ministry.

Brethren Inner City Ministries (BIC) is a community-based, para-church ministry operating under the auspices of the Indiana District of The Brethren Church. Its mission is to reach residents in the Norwood, Beechcrest, and Barrington communities of Indianapolis with the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ in an enabling and meaningful way.

Team members would assist Dr. Gene Bell, pastor and director of BIC, with ongoing efforts to develop and conduct meaningful outreach ministries within the selected communities, using non-traditional approaches. They will serve as "tent-makers," meaning that they would need to raise their own support for living expenses.

For qualifications, requirements, and other information about serving in this way with BIC, contact Dr. Bell by phone (317-353-9927), e-mail (Eugenebell@aol.com), or fax (317-353-9927). [✝]

Good news from Ashland University

Beginning next school year (2000-2001), Brethren students at Ashland University (both new and continuing students) will receive an additional \$1,000 per year in financial aid, increasing the Brethren Award to \$2,000 per year. Also, the Ministerial Award (for children of full-time Brethren pastors and missionaries) will be increased from 40 to 75 percent. (Note: students who receive the Ministerial Award are not eligible for the Brethren Award.) [✝]

Leaps of Faith at Sarver Brethren Church

By Diane Parachino

I WAS READING in the EVANGELIST how various churches celebrated Pastor Appreciation Month, and I thought you might like to hear how we celebrated at the Sarver Brethren Church in Sarver, Pennsylvania.

During a break at the 1999 General Conference, our pastor, Clair Knappenberger, was talking with one of the board members from our church about the 2000 General Conference to be held at Estes Park, Colorado. Pastor Clair mentioned that even though he would love to go, he would not feel right going without Deb, his wife. Not only would it be a wonderful trip for the two of them, but Deb has never been to General Conference. Unfortunately, he added, due to the expense of the trip, that would be impossible.

Several weeks later, at a church board meeting, the General Conference trip was brought up. Again Pastor Clair stated that he would not be going, despite Deb's insistence that he go without her. How could he go to such a beautiful place and leave her home alone? He just couldn't do it.

On October 31, before Pastor Clair started his sermon, Marsha Nulph (worship chairperson at the time) came forward holding a Pastor's Appreciation gift (a glass candleholder) to present to Pastor Clair and Deb. But wait, she also had an announcement. "The congregation will be sending Pastor Clair and Deb to General Conference at Estes Park, Colorado . . . all expenses paid. And, we're going to have a special offering once a month until August 2000 to collect for the trip." This was a leap of faith by the congregation.

But this isn't the first time Pastor Clair, his family, and the Sarver Brethren Church have been involved in a leap of faith. Born and



Pastor Clair Knappenberger and wife Deb with daughters Candice (r.) and Melissa.

raised in rural Vandergrift, Pa., Clair didn't accept the Lord as Savior until he was 26 years old. He then attended Pleasant View Brethren Church until he was called to become a pastor. Accepting that call was another leap of faith.

He started pastoring at Sarver Brethren Church in November 1994 while maintaining a full-time job as a machinist. A leap of faith! In 1997 the Sarver Brethren voted unanimously to support Pastor Clair as their full-time pastor. A leap of faith. Pastor Clair would have to start an intensive five-year ordination program. A leap of faith. The congregation would have to increase its giving. A leap of faith. His family would have to make sacrifices so that he could carry out God's work. A leap of faith.

Romans 1:12 speaks of being "mutually encouraged by each other's faith." Take a leap of faith, and see how much God blesses you for it. [✝]

Mrs. Parachino serves as newsletter editor for the Sarver Brethren Church.

Christians should always remember that the value of their good works is not based on their number and excellence, but on the love of God which prompts them to do these things.

— Juan de la Cruz



North Georgetown Brethren pack shoe boxes for India

North Georgetown, Ohio — Members of the North Georgetown First Brethren Church recently filled 71 shoe boxes with toys, school supplies, clothing, and personal hygiene items for children in the Brethren orphanages in India. This activity was part of a mission project sponsored by the Evelyn Mercer Women's Missionary Society of the North Georgetown Church.

The children of the congregation got into the act by helping their families assemble the shoe boxes. They also made gospel bracelets for each of the Indian boys and girls in the orphanages.

The 71 shoe boxes were shipped to India on February 22. Also sent was a large carton of medical supplies. Total weight of the shipment was 378 pounds.

According to Karen Funkhouser, wife of Pastor Mitch Funkhouser, "The North Georgetown Brethren are blessed to be a part of the Kumars' ministry in India."

— reported by Karen Funkhouser



Children of the North Georgetown, Ohio, First Brethren Church display shoe boxes they helped pack for children in India. In back, l. to r., Abbey Latham, Mikayla Curfman, Megan Diehl, Hannah Suter, Claire Funkhouser, and Josh Latham. In front, l. to r., Ed Ricci, Alivia Seibert, Amber Diehl, Autumn Diehl, Molly McVicker, and Jarod Cameron.

Alvin Grumbling honored by Flora Church for 50 years as an ordained Brethren elder

Flora, Ind. — For retired Brethren pastor Rev. Alvin H. Grumbling, March 26, 2000, was a significant day. On that day 50 years ago, he was ordained to pastoral ministry as an elder in The Brethren Church.

To mark this occasion, Flora First Brethren Church, where Rev. Grumbling was serving

when in retired in 1994, surprised him on Sunday morning, March 12, by presenting him a plaque. The plaque reads: "Alvin Grumbling. In special recognition of 50 years ordained ministry. March 26, 2000. First Brethren Church."

Rev. Grumbling's ordination on March 26, 1950, occurred one day



Rev. Alvin Grumbling holds a plaque presented to him by the Flora First Brethren Church. Standing with him is Scott Meadows, current pastor of the Flora congregation.

The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and labor.

— William Wordsworth

after his 23rd birthday. It took place in his home church, the Third Brethren Church of Johnstown, Pa. His father, Clyde Grumbling, who was a deacon in the church, and his father-in-law, Rev. C.Y. Gilmer, participated in the ordination service.

At that time Rev. Grumbling was serving as pastor of the

First Brethren Church of Pittsburgh, Pa. He went on to serve Brethren churches in Bryan, Ohio (52-57); Stockton, Calif. (57-60); Manteca, Calif. (60-69); and Newark, Ohio (69-76) before coming to Flora. He served the Flora church from July 1, 1976, until his retirement on June 30, 1994.

Rev. Grumbling attended Ashland College, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1949. He also attended Ashland Theological Seminary and Xenia Seminary in Pittsburgh.

On May 30, 1948, he married Mary E. Gilmer. They were the parents of two sons, Gary Lester and Dennis Keith. Dennis died on June 11, 1993, of complications following open-heart surgery. Mrs. Gilmer passed away January 3, 1997. Gary lives with his father in Flora.

During his pastoral ministry Rev. Grumbling served two mission churches (Stockton and Newark). He served on the national Missionary Board and as executive secretary for the Brethren denomination. He also held a number of district positions, including moderator of the Northern California District, moderator of the Ohio District, and five years each on the Indiana District Mission Board, as Indiana District treasurer, and on the Board of Directors for Camp Shipshewana.

— reported by Pat Calhoun

Exciting happenings at County Line Church

Shared by Helen Dickson

GREETINGS from the County Line Brethren Church of Lakeville, Indiana. We want to share some of the exciting things that are happening at our church.

In September our new pastor, Rev. Larry Hanson, and his family arrived and moved into our newly-renovated parsonage.

Our church building is situated on Route U.S. 31, a major four-lane highway. One of our problems has been communicating with the masses who pass by the church. To help remedy this, a large lighted sign was purchased and installed. The base for the sign and the landscaping is being done by some of the men of the church.

Our church location provides us another wonderful opportunity for ministry. We are located just across the highway from Laville High School and Elementary School. This gives us the wonderful opportunity to sponsor a soccer team and a baseball team each summer. Some of our members also coach these teams.

We recently obtained the services of Rachel Irby, a student at Bethel College, as youth director. She is an answer to our prayers. She is the spark we needed to get our local youth involved and to minister to the many youth of our community. Currently the youth group is busy trying to earn enough money to go to General Conference in Colorado.

State Representative Richard Mangus, a member of our church, invited our youth to go to Indianapolis (our state capital) to act as pages for a day. Our pastor was also invited to have prayer for the opening session

of the legislature. Five of our youth took advantage of this opportunity.

An existing program of the church that impresses me is the Sonshine Club. This is a ministry to children from four years old to sixth grade. The Sonshine Club meets on Tues-



Above, new church sign is already being put to good use. Piles of dirt are for a landscaped mound around the sign. At right, Karen Wicks tells a story to the children while Pastor Larry Hanson looks on.



day evenings for 10 to 12 weeks two times a year—usually in the spring and in the fall. This spring 57 children are enrolled, with an average attendance of 32. Although many children from our church attend, the major thrust of the Sonshine Club is to reach the unchurched children of our community.

We are fortunate to have a very talented person in our church—Karen Wicks—who has the gift of working with children. Karen not only leads the Sonshine Club, she also presents an original children's story every Sunday morning. She somehow finds time to attend to these ministries in addition to her profession as a nurse and being the mother of four children.

It is a thrill to see 20 to 22 children sitting with Karen at the front

of the worship service attentively listening to her scripture-based stories. Following the story time, the children go to the basement for junior church. We intend for our children to understand that they are an essential part of the church of today.

The W.M.S. was reactivated two years ago. We had our first mother-daughter banquet in seven years with an attendance of well over 100. Many other projects are planned.

At 6:30 on Saturday mornings, a group of men from the church meet

for a prayer breakfast—or as my husband calls it, the Donut Club. They pray for men who do not attend with their families. Later they contact these men and assure them that they would like to have

them become a part of our fellowship. This has been a very successful ministry.

Some other exciting things happening are a drama group, an adult choir, and a children's choir. There is truly something for everyone here. We are truly praising the Lord for many things that are happening here at County Line Church. [✠]

Mrs. Dickson is a member of the County Line Church, and her husband, Rev. Duane Dickson, served the congregation as interim pastor prior to the coming of Rev. Hanson.

In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.

—Eric Hoffer





Ohio District receives good news; faces difficult issues

Gratis, Ohio — Several noteworthy things happened Saturday, April 15, when Ohio Brethren met at the Gratis First Brethren Church for their District Conference:

- The Living Waters Community Church, a new Brethren church near Mansfield, was upgraded from class to mission congregation in recognition of the progress it has made since its "birth Sunday" on September 19, 1999. Under the leadership of Pastor Ron Miller, the new church is averaging around 105 for worship.

- The Ohio District Mission Board announced that Jeff Whiteside will be the church planter for a new Brethren church in Delaware, Ohio. Rev. Whiteside has served for several years as associate pastor of the nearby Smoky Row Brethren, which will help sponsor the new church.

- District BYIC spokesperson Kevin Gibson gave an upbeat report of youth activity in the district. He said that 180 youth attended a district rally recently at the Smithville Brethren Church. This is one of the best-attended district youth events in many years. The youth also sponsored the lunch for the district conference. The food was donated and a freewill offering received. A total of \$500 was raised, which will go to the National BYIC project.

- Tom Stoffer was given a gift and a standing ovation in appreciation for his 34 years of service as the Ohio District's representative on the Ashland University Board of Trustees. (See photo.)

The conference opened with a time of spirited worship in music led by a worship team from the Gratis Church. Then Moderator-Elect Ed Miller, pastor of the Fremont Brethren Church, led the conference in a period of confession and prayer.

This spirit of prayer permeated

the business session that followed. As Moderator Lynn Mercer, pastor of the Gretna Brethren Church, led the conference through some difficult issues, he paused occasionally for times of prayer. Business was dominated by discussion of how the district should respond to two churches — Hillcrest Church in Dayton and Mt. Zion Christian Fellowship in Highland Hills (a Cleveland suburb) — that have expressed a desire to withdraw from the district and from the Brethren denomination.

Delegates discussed, modified, and then passed a policy statement prepared by the district Board of Directors outlining a procedure for dealing with such requests. The policy requires that a four-member task force be formed to handle such requests when they arise. This task force is to prepare a report for the Board of Directors giving historical background, an explanation of the situation, insights gained, and a suggested plan for reconciliation between the district and the church.

If approved by the board, the plan for reconciliation is presented to the church that has expressed a desire to withdraw. Should the plan for reconciliation not be accepted by the church, services of a Christian conciliation service will be sought for the purpose of entering into binding arbitration. Having approved this procedure, the conference then voted to follow it in dealing with the requests of both Hillcrest Church and Mt. Zion Christian Fellowship.

Other business included elections, adoption of a budget, district reports, and updates of denominational ministries. Rev. Ed Miller now becomes district moderator, and Rev. Bob French, pastor of the Gratis Church, is the new moderator-elect. Other officers include secretary Ralph Gibson, assistant secretary Joan Ronk, treasurer Stan Gentle, assistant treasurer Bill Walk, and statistician Tony Price.

The business session was followed by brief auxiliary meetings. The



Tom Stoffer (2nd from r.) receives a gift of appreciation for his 34 years as the Ohio District's representative to the Ashland University Board of Trustees. For a number of those years he served as vice-chairman of the board and as chair of the seminary committee. Ashland Theological Seminary President Fred Finks made the presentation. With them are Trustee Chairman Buzz Sandberg (l.) and Ohio District Moderator Lynn Mercer.

conference then concluded with moderator's observations and expressions of thanks, an installation service, and benediction by the new moderator. Next year's conference is scheduled for April 28, 2001, at Louisville Brethren Bible Church.

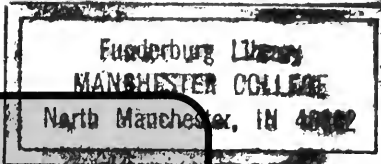
— reported by Richard Winfield

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The Brethren

Evangelist

Vol. 122, No. 6

A newsletter for Brethren people

June 2000

The Search for Loving Family Relationships

LOVING FAMILY relationships. Who needs them? Who wants them?" asks Jim Russell in an article in *Pen & Sword* newsletter. "Ninety-nine percent of Americans, that's who!" he responds.

Russell cites a survey co-sponsored by Columbia University and the National Institutes of Health in which survey participants ranked a desire to experience loving family relationships above all other personal wishes, even higher than a desire for financial security or a satisfying sex life.

Unfortunately, loving family rela-

tionships are on the decline in our society. Russell quotes from the September 1999 issue of *Emerging Trends*, a publication of the Princeton Religion Research Center, which states, "For the first time in a half century of surveys on the public's top national concerns, 'ethics, morality, and family decline' lead the list, along with 'crime and violence.'" Certainly our own experience of listening to the

news, reading newspapers, and observing life bears out the truth that loving family relationships are on the decline.

So what can we do? The special emphasis this month in The Brethren Church is on family life. As part of that emphasis, this issue of the *EVANGELIST* contains a variety of articles about the family. These articles provide some answers to that question, "What can we do—in our homes and in our churches—to build loving family relationships?"

— The Editor

Being Willing to *Live* for Our Children

By Dan Lawson

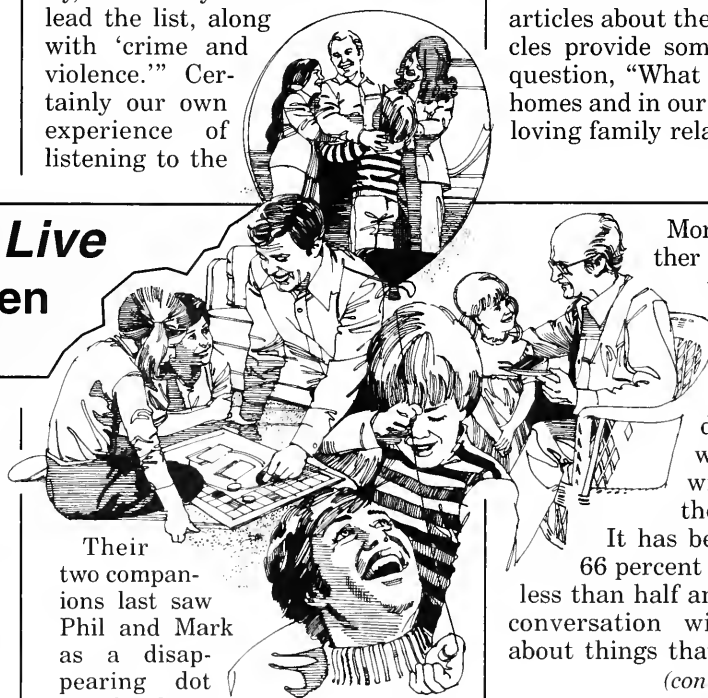
PATRICK MORLEY, in his book *Man in the Mirror*, tells the story of four fishermen who traveled by seaplane to a secluded bay in Alaska to fish for salmon. Due to a puncture in one of the seaplane's pontoons, the plane crashed in the middle of the bay. Two of the fishermen were Dr. Phil Littleford and his 12-year-old son Mark. Morely tells what happened to them:

No safety equipment could be found on board—no life vests, no flares, nothing. The plane gurgled and submerged into the blackness of the icy morning sea . . .

They all began to swim for shore, but the rip-tide countered every stroke. The two men alongside Phil and Mark were strong swimmers and they both made shore, one just catching the tip of land as the tide pulled them out to sea.

Their two companions last saw Phil and Mark as a disappearing dot on the horizon, swept arm-in-arm out to sea.

The Coast Guard reported they probably lasted no more than an hour in the freezing waters—hypothermia would chill the body functions and they would go to sleep. Mark, with the smaller body mass would fall asleep first in his father's arms. Phil could have made the shoreline, too, but that would have meant abandoning his son. Their bodies were never found.



Morely asks, "What father wouldn't be willing to die for his son?"

Then he adds, "If we are willing to go so far as to die for our children, why is it that we often don't seem willing to live for them?"¹

It has been estimated that 66 percent of teenagers spend less than half an hour per week in conversation with their fathers about things that are important to

(continued on next page)

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Around the denomination	9

teens.² Parents often testify how difficult it is to communicate with their children. One parent told me that she was amazed at the apparent lack of respect that today's children have for parents, grandparents, and adults in general. She wondered how children today came to be "like this."

C. Everett Koop, former U.S. Surgeon General, once said, "Life affords no greater responsibility and no greater privilege than the raising of the next generation." Yet some people believe that this next generation neither desires nor respects the influence of the previous generation.

Respect is owed, not earned

Many young people today are of the opinion that parents must earn their respect. In fact, this attitude seems to be an outcropping of today's social norms. This attitude, however, could not be further from the truth. God feels so strongly about respect that He made honor and respect for father and mother one of the Ten Commandments.

The word used for "honor" in this commandment can be translated "highly prize, care for, show respect for, or obey." Notice that God does not say, "Honor your father and mother if they earn it or if they deserve it." This type of loyalty is to be given without question and is to spring out of our relationship with God and as a reflection of our respect for Him.

Some of us may recall the popular song from the 1970s called "Cat's in the Cradle." The father in the song is always too busy to take time for his son. All the while the boy keeps telling his father that he wants to grow up to be "just like you, Dad." By the end of the song the boy has

grown into manhood and is now too busy to take time for his father—to which the father laments, "He's grown up just like me."

Dr. Karl Menninger once stated, "What is done to children they will do to society." This may be what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote in Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Or in Colossians 3:21, "Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." The responsibility in these two passages is placed squarely on the shoulders of the parents. Parents are to raise their children in such a way as to retain the respect granted to them by God in the Ten Commandments.

Salvation statistics

The truth is that as parents, we train our children more by our actions than by our words. Statistics show that when a father is the first member of a family to come to faith in Christ, 60 percent of the time his entire family comes to faith in Christ. When a mother is the first to come to faith in Christ, the odds are only 40 to 50 percent that the entire family will come to faith in Christ. And when a child is first to come to faith, the chances of the rest of the family becoming Christians drops to 25 percent.

What this tells us is that parents have a tremendous influence on the salvation of their children. It is for this reason that we who are parents need to be strong in the Lord. Deuteronomy 11:18-19 tells us to "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Not an easy task

Parenting has never been an easy task. Today the difficulties of parenting are magnified by television programs and popular songs that seem to teach children to be disrespectful to their parents and to adults in general.

When you feel as though you are doing a bad job as a parent and your children tell you you don't have a clue, then trust in the Lord and lean not on your own understanding. Believe that the counsel of the Lord is eternal and that the wisdom of God exceeds all generations. [†]

Dr. Lawson is Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church.

¹Patrick Morley, *The Man in the Mirror*, Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, 1989; p. 89-90.

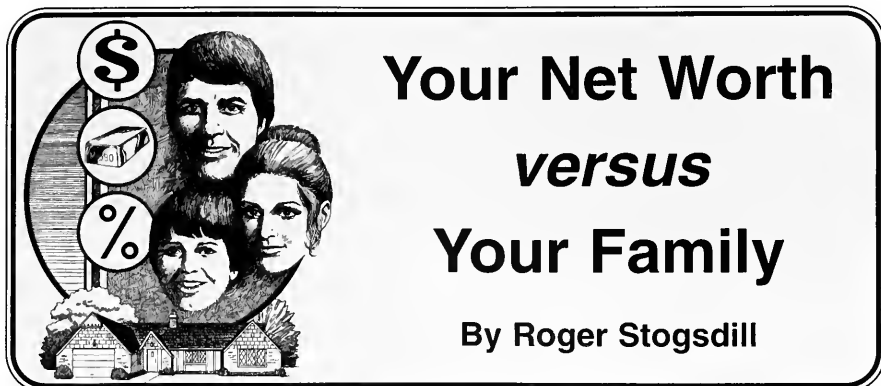
²*Leadership Journal*, Winter, 1996; p. 81.



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Pontius' Puddle





Your Net Worth versus Your Family

By Roger Stogsdill

WHAT IS YOUR NET WORTH? Have you ever looked at what someone else has and wondered what it would be like to have that person's net worth? Have you ever watched the infomercials about building wealth and wondered if it is really that easy?

Let me give you a word of caution before you start down that path. The desire for wealth can cause a person to exhibit addictive behavior. Hear me right: I did not say that it has to or that it always will bring about such behavior. But the quest to be rich can consume some people, much the way alcohol and drugs consume others.

I'll never forget what a friend in the archery business told me. This was a man who had been a national champion archer. I asked him why he no longer shot his bow. He said it was because archery had become an addiction for him. He had come to

realize that he was spending every spare moment and every spare dime on it. He had sacrificed everything, including time with his family, for it. For his own well-being and the well-being of his family, he had to stay away from shooting his bow. It was then that I realized that many things can create addictions.

Addicted to riches

The quest for riches can affect some people in a similar way. They drive so hard to "make it" in this world that they sacrifice a lot of valuable things. They may even sacrifice time with their families in order to "provide for them." If you are such a person, ask someone in your family if they prefer having you or what you provide them.

Solomon's advice to his son was, "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches,

and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle" (Prov. 23:4-5, *NIV*). Solomon is saying that there is something of more value (not to mention longer lasting) than riches. Given the fact that he is talking with his son, he is saying that wisely building strong relationships is more valuable than building wealth. Certainly, the primary relationship of worth is with God.

Perhaps the most valuable thing you can do together as a family is to build your relationship with God. Don't become so busy doing other things, even good things, that you don't have time as a family to spend time with God. For if you do, you will not only miss some rich blessings yourself, but you will teach your children that God is secondary; that He is not as important as wealth; that He is worthy only of what time you have left after you've done everything else.

My financial software calculates net worth. It takes into account income, expenses, bank accounts, debts, assets, and liabilities. It does not, however, account for my worth in Christ or what He has done for my family. Too bad! My family's net worth would look a lot better on paper if it did. How about you? [†]

Rev. Stogsdill is pastor of the First Brethren Church of Tucson, Ariz. This article first appeared in the Tucson First Brethren Church Newsletter.



Praying for Our Children

By Karen Frado

DO YOUR CHILDREN NEED PRAYER? Mine do. Violence, vulgarity, disease, and destruction touch all of our lives. They cause our children to question God's power and plan, and they threaten our children's obedient walk with Christ. We are *not* powerless, however, against the onslaught of these evil forces.

Parents all over the world are uniting in prayer for their children and their children's classmates. *Grandparents* are meeting before school hours to pray around and through the schools. *Fathers* are gather-

ing to reclaim their children's futures. *Mothers* are organizing prayer groups.

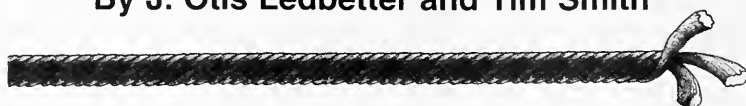
One such example is **Moms In Touch**. More than 150,000 mothers across the nation meet weekly for an hour of prayer for children. They praise God, make silent confession, and offer prayers of thanksgiving for students, teachers, and school administrators. For more information, call 1-800-949-MOMS or read *When Mothers Pray* by Cheri Fuller.

Churches, likewise, are getting serious about praying for their youth. Some churches take pictures of their young people who want prayer. Names and some personal information about the youth are written on the backs of the pictures, which are then given to adult intercessors who make a commitment to pray for and stay in contact with the young person. The average length of the commitment is one year. [†]

Mrs. Frado is a Brethren student at Ashland Theological Seminary and a strong advocate for prayer.

A Rope With Three Cords

By J. Otis Ledbetter and Tim Smith



EVERY FAMILY has a heritage, a legacy passed from generation to generation. In truth, though, the heritage is something few parents really understand. Too many times we are not sure what it is or the impact that it has on our lives—and on the lives of those we love.

Every family legacy has three distinct yet interrelated parts, like a rope with three cords: spiritual, emotional, and social. These three cords secure a person to the *past*, give ballast to a person in the *present*, and help him or her look with hope into the *future*.

The wise king Solomon said, “A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecc. 4:12, *NIV*). Together, the cords are stronger than any one or two alone. Each cord is essential and influences the other two. They are intertwined and interdependent. We will see in our children exactly what they have seen in us. Let’s look at how each cord contributes to a strong family heritage.

The spiritual cord

The *spiritual* cord is the process of modeling and reinforcing the unseen realities of life. Many families neglect this vital aspect of heritage, dismissing it as “religious,” “unnecessary” or “irrelevant.” Yet every human being is made in the image of God with a built-in hunger for connecting with Him.

Those without a spiritual cord are destined to have a weak sense of identity and purpose. Spiritual legacy is more than baptism, a camp experience, or deliverance from tragedy. It is integrating God’s timeless truths into our everyday experience as a family. It is usually *caught* rather than *taught*. Our children observe in us, their parents, the truth of spiritual realities by watching how we live.

The emotional cord

The *emotional* cord creates an atmosphere of security and love at home, preparing children for the challenges of life. We’ve met many adults suffering the long-term effects of a painful childhood, now crippled with a negative emotional legacy. Insecure, feeling unloved, and desperate for approval, these adults are not equipped for the roller coast-

er of life’s ups and downs. The emotional cord provides the connection of belonging and approval. When a child feels connected to her parent(s), she sees herself as competent, capable, and supported. This emotional cord is woven over time through a parent’s expressing unconditional love and acceptance to offspring. It is woven by communicating in a variety of ways, “I will always love you—no matter what.”

The social cord

The *social* cord means teaching a child the skills necessary for cultivating healthy, stable relationships. I’ve seen children who are in emotionally healthy Christian homes (the first two cords), but who are handicapped by an inability to relate to other people. Those who are

(continued at bottom of next page)

Helping Today’s Teenagers

By Nick Pollard

LUKE AND LIZZIE, my young children, sat on the sled at the top of the steepest, fastest slope in the middle of our snow-covered local park. They pushed off and soon gathered speed. I wasn’t sure whether they were being brave or foolhardy—because this particular slope had a water-filled ditch at the end of it, and they were not very good at steering. In fact, as the sled picked up speed, it became clear that they had very little control over it at all. But they did have an implicit faith in me, whom they had asked to stand in front of the ditch to keep them from falling in.

So there I was with this heavy sled coming straight toward me at high speed. There was no way I would be able to stop it. If I tried, I would get hurt and so would they—and we would probably all end up in the water. So I stood aside. I moved out of the way. And as the sled carry-

ing my children swept past me, I ran alongside them and gently nudged it. That was enough to change its direction. It turned to the

left, onto another slope that took it away from the ditch. So they didn’t end up in the water. They were safe. I was unharmed. And they were delighted with their extra-long ride.

That is a picture of the task that faces many of us as we try to help today’s teenagers. We watch them as they gather speed downhill on a course that will inevitably hurt them and others.

If we try to stand in their way, they will collide with us in a huge confrontation. But if we run alongside and gently nudge them in another direction, we might be able to help them to find another path. [✞]



From *Why Do They Do That?* by Nick Pollard and Eric Stanford, Lion Publishing. Article provided by David C. Cook Ministry Relations.

Keys to Effective Family Nights

By Jim Wiedmann and Kurt Bruner

SOMETIMES we accidentally impress the wrong things on our kids rather than intentionally impressing the right things. But there is an effective, easy way to change that. Routine family nights are a powerful tool for creating intentional impression points with our children. We need to take advantage of every opportunity to impress our beliefs and values on the lives of our children. There are several keys which should be incorporated into effective family nights.

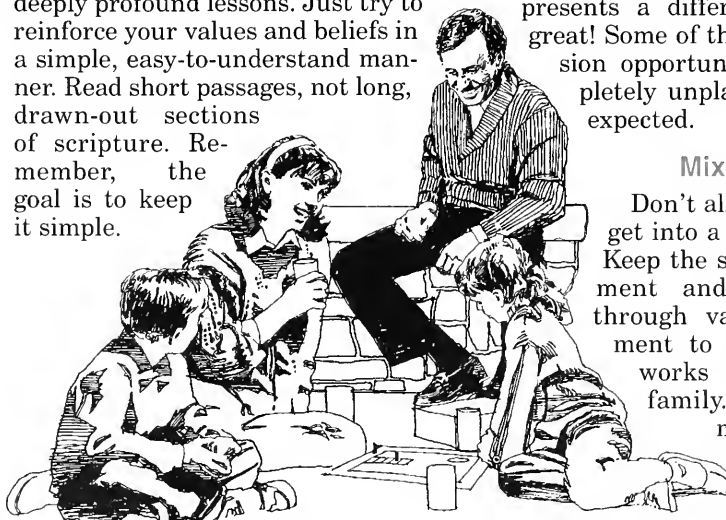
Make it fun!

Enjoy yourself, and let the kids have a ball. They may not remember everything you say, but they will always cherish the times of laughter—and so will you.

Keep it simple!

The minute you become sophisticated or complicated, you've missed

the whole point. Don't try to create deeply profound lessons. Just try to reinforce your values and beliefs in a simple, easy-to-understand manner. Read short passages, not long, drawn-out sections of scripture. Remember, the goal is to keep it simple.



Don't dominate!

You want to pull them into the discovery process as much as possible. If you do all the talking, you've

missed the mark. Ask questions, give assignments, and invite participation in every way possible. They will learn more when you involve all of their senses and emotions.

Go with the flow!

It's fine to start with a well-defined outline, but don't kill spontaneity by becoming overly structured. If an incident or question presents a different direction, great! Some of the best impression opportunities are completely unplanned and unexpected.

Mix it up!

Don't allow yourself to get into a rut of routine. Keep the sense of excitement and anticipation through variety. Experiment to discover what works best for your family. Use books, made-up stories, props, videos, music, music

videos, songs, games, or even go on a family outing.

Do it often!

We tend to find time for the things that are really important. It is best to set aside one evening per week (the same evening if possible) for family night. Remember, repetition is the best teacher. The more impressions you can create, the more of an impact you will make.

Make a memory!

Find ways to make the lesson stick. For example, just as advertisers create "jingles" to help us remember their products, it is helpful to create family night "jingles" to remember the main theme—such as "It's best for you, to seek what's true" or "Just like air, God is there!" [T]

From *Heritage Builders: An Introduction to Family Nights* by Jim Wiedmann and Kurt Bruner with Mike and Amy Nappa, Chariot Victor Publishing. Article provided by David C. Cook Ministry Relations. Used by Permission. For more family-night ideas and information on how to build a godly heritage in your home, go to www.heritagebuilders.com on the Internet.

A Rope With Three Cords

(continued from previous page)

able to make friends and keep them have an edge in the game of life. Those who don't are limited; they have a loss of freedom and resources. Instead of feeling blessed, they almost feel cursed by isolation and loneliness.

The best way to pass a social legacy to your child is to model it. Let him see you demonstrate respect, responsibility, compassion, and boundary-setting. When you teach children to relate effectively and solve conflict, you are preparing them for marriage and a family of their own.

The concept behind heritage-building is rooted in a biblical mandate summarized in Deuteronomy 6:5-9 (NIV):

Love the LORD your God with all

your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children!

How?

Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

In other words, we need to take advantage of every opportunity to impress our beliefs and values on the lives of our children. [T]

From *Heritage Builders: Family Traditions* by J. Otis Ledbetter and Tim Smith, Chariot Victor Publishing. Article provided by David C. Cook Ministry Relations. Used by permission.

Learning to Live in an Empty Nest

By James J. Jackson



FAMILY DYNAMICS change dramatically after the kids leave home. The parent/grown-child relationship becomes very different from what it was when the child was totally dependent upon the parents. One major determining factor in whether parents and grown children successfully navigate this new relational ground is whether basic principles have been established during childhood.

Although it may be difficult for parents of teenagers to believe, the majority of young people do eventually leave home. Parents must then learn how to live all over again. We call this "The Empty Nest Syndrome," which my wife and I have experienced.

Making adjustments

As each of our four daughters departed from our home, we faced certain adjustments, logistical (i.e., fights over the newly-vacated bedroom) as well as emotional. After our youngest went away to college, we quickly entered The Syndrome.

Grocery shopping and food preparation were early manifestations of this syndrome. We continued to buy milk by the gallon. Historically, we used it up before the expiration date; now it spoiled. Even a half gallon proved to be too much, so we buy quarts. Invariably, one of our daughters will drop by and drink the available milk in one sitting.

We continued to cook enough food for four to six people. Old habits die hard. Another new experience: an abundance of leftovers. After about four nights of the same meat loaf on my plate, garnished in a vain attempt to disguise its familiarity, it was obvious that we needed to change our meal planning.

Actually, it was pretty neat. A

smaller grocery list allowed us to buy the choice, individual potatoes and onions instead of buying by the sack. We could eat more steak and less pot roast, ground round rather than hamburger. We could also afford to eat out more often.

Discovering new "laws"

We quickly discovered the "Empty Nest Law": "The smaller the meal, the more likely a grown progeny will show up at dinner time, looking gaunt and famished." This law taught us to keep "heat 'n' eat" food on hand, like hot dogs and burger patties, and to invite the "guest" to fix herself something else instead of coveting our plates.

"Empty-Nesters" also find that, while pre-approved access to their kids' homes is not allowed, the kids

The Church as Family

While the articles in this issue have focused on the biological family, we must not overlook the role of the church as "family." We are the family of God. We are "brothers and sisters" in the Lord. In our day, when so many people fail to find loving family relationships in the home, they need to be able to find love and acceptance in the church.

In order to do this, we must be careful that church activities are not so oriented toward the traditional family that the widowed, the divorced, the never-married, single-parents, and those from abusive and broken homes feel excluded. We must not only make them feel welcome, but we must go beyond that and seek to minister to their special needs. Our churches need to be places where every believer feels accepted as a cherished member of the family of God. [✠]

insist on keeping keys to their parents' home. One daughter, frequently in need of cosmetics, clothing, and other necessities of life, would simply "shop" through her mother's closet, jewelry, and make-up when no one was home. After all, this will always be her "home," right? We took the key.

Parents are expected to leave the departed grown-child's room the way it was left, perhaps as a "safety net." One visiting daughter tearfully asked what we had done to "her room." I calmly responded, "Oh, you must mean my office. You didn't really expect us to leave that room like it was, did you?" She did.

Not that we don't have enough reminders of our children. Our basement looks like a self-storage facility. I think we recently declared our fifth ultimatum: "If you don't remove your stuff by [insert date], we will give it to charity." I think they realize by now that we're bluffing.

Nesters also are not to meddle in the business of their grown-up children, but the kids somehow retain the right to know your whereabouts. Returning from an impromptu weekend away, we found several terse phone messages, including, "Hey, it's after midnight! Where are you?" and "Didn't you guys come home at all last night? Why didn't you tell us you were going away? Call me as soon as you get home!" My, how things change!

New relationships

Many young adults' expectations of unbridled freedom from rules are quickly blind-sided by brutal, blunt reality. Reality often breeds a longing for "home sweet home." Grown children moving back in with their parents is a subject for another time.

When parents follow God's design for rearing children and teach their children that God commands them to "Honor your father and mother . . .," parents and children enter into a new, exciting, and mutually fulfilling relationship with one another. Then the nest is not so empty after all. [✠]

Mr. Jackson is a freelance writer and a columnist for the Valley Christian Chronicle. This article was furnished courtesy of The Amy Foundation Internet Syndicate (www.amyfound.org).

2000 General Conference Schedule

August 7–11 at Estes Park Center, Estes Park, Colorado

Theme: *Renew Our Spirit*

Monday, August 7

5:00 to 7:00 pm—Dinner
7:00 pm—Opening Celebration:
Comments by Dr.
Emanuel (Buzz) Sand-
berg; message by Dr.
Dan Lawson



Dan Lawson

Tuesday, August 8

7:00 to 8:30 am—Breakfast
8:30 am—Devotions
9:00 am—Auxiliary Sessions
9:00 am—Presentation by Dr. Terry Wardle: *The Flame of Love; the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in Our Day*
11:00 am—Business Session
12:15 pm—All-Conference group picture
Afternoon—Free Time*

1:00 pm—Rocky Mountain National Park tour departs**
1:45 pm—2½-hour horseback ride departs**
3:30 pm—1½-hour horseback ride departs**

5:00 to 7:00 pm—Dinner
7:00 pm—Worship: Message by Mrs. Sally Morgenthaler, *Can We Read Billboards?*



Sally Morgenthaler

Wednesday, August 9

7:00 to 8:30 am—Breakfast
8:30 am—Devotions
9:00 am—Workshops: *Touchstones of Worship for Postmoderns* led by Mrs. Sally Morgenthaler; *Healing Spiritual Abuse* led by Dr. Ken Blue

11:00 am—Missions Presentation
Afternoon—Free Time*

12:30 pm—Departure for golf outing**

1:00 pm—Rocky Mountain National Park tour bus departs**

1:00 pm—Bus departs for Loveland Outlet Shopping Mall**

5:00 to 7:00 pm—Dinner

7:00 pm—Worship: Message by Dr. Ken Blue, *By the Grace of God*



Ken Blue

*Shuttles to and from downtown Estes Park will be available throughout the afternoon. Time and drop-off points will be printed in the Conference program book.

**Advanced registration is required.

Thursday, August 10

7:00 to 8:30 am—Breakfast
8:30 am—Devotions
9:00 am—Workshops: *The Power of Grace* led by Dr. Ken Blue; *It's More Than a Technique: a Biblical Model for Church Growth* led by Rev. Bill Wright

11:00 am—Business Session

Afternoon—Free Time* with an option to attend workshops

1:00 pm—Workshop: *Catching God's Vision for Church Planting* led by Terry Wardle

3:00 pm—Church-Planting Forum with Rev. Reilly Smith, Dr. Terry Wardle, and Brethren Church Planters

1:00 pm—Rocky Mountain National Park tour bus departs**

1:45 pm—2½-hour horseback ride departs**

3:30 pm—1½-hour horseback ride departs**

5:00 to 7:00 pm—Dinner

7:00 pm—Worship: Message by Dr. H.B. London, *Enjoying the Journey*



H.B. London

Friday, August 11

7:00 to 8:30 am—Breakfast

7:00 to 8:30 am—Breakfast meeting for Council Members and Nominating Committee

8:30 am—Devotions

9:00 am—Workshop: *When to Hold 'em and When to Fold 'em! The Stressors in a Clergy Family's Life, and How Faithful Laymen Can Help Their Pastor Succeed* led by Dr. H.B. London

11:00 am—Closing Session: Message by Dr. John Shultz



John Shultz

Dr. Ken Blue (photo at left) has been added to the guest speakers announced earlier for this year's Conference (see p. 5 of the March issue). Dr. Blue will speak Wednesday evening and present workshops Wednesday and Thursday mornings. A senior consultant with the San Diego Consulting Group, Dr. Blue is an expert in the areas of personal and organizational effectiveness. He is the author of several books, including *Church Discipline That Heals* and *Healing Spiritual Abuse*. He and his wife Patti, parents of eight children, live in San Diego, Calif. (Argentine pastor Rev. Eduardo Rodriguez, scheduled to speak Wednesday evening, will be unable to attend because of his wife's ill health.)

New Brethren Church Launched in Pasadena, California

A NEW BRETHREN CHURCH was launched Easter weekend in Pasadena, California. Called *Centro Cristiano Para la Familia* (Christian Center for the Family), this new church plant is an outreach to Hispanics in Pasadena by Drs. Juan Carlos and María Miranda.

Two special events highlighted the weekend, as the cell group that had been meeting since October in the Mirandas' living room held its first public meetings. The initial event was a showing of the *JESUS* film on

The second event of the weekend was the Birth-Sunday worship service on Easter Sunday morning. In contrast to Friday night, the weather on Sunday morning was beautiful. Attendance figures remained about the same, but several people came who had not attended on Friday night. Rev. Juan Korszyk of Voice of the Family Ministries spoke at the service, and his wife, Ester Mabel Korszyk, provided special

to whom he was talking (Pastor Miranda) could have been married for 46 years. So Dr. Miranda had to explain the difference between our church and the church the man grew up in in Latin America.

The many calls the Mirandas received are not surprising in light of the Herculean efforts made to publicize the new church. On Palm Sunday weekend, 43,632 flyers were distributed door-to-door by carrier delivery to the four zip codes surrounding the church. The homes and apartments in this area have a total population of 119,484 people, of whom 36.5 percent (43,612 people) are Hispanic. Another 12,500 flyers were inserted two different days in *La Opinion*, the largest

Spanish newspaper in Los Angeles. These copies of the paper were those to be delivered to subscribers in the new church's target area, all of whom would be Hispanic readers.

In addition to the printed flyers, 26 one-minute radio spots were aired on a local secular radio station, and 70 on a Christian station. Color posters announcing the showing of the *JESUS*

film were placed in Hispanic stores. Personal invitations were mailed to numerous friends and acquaintances, and hundreds more flyers were distributed by the ten core members of *Centro Cristiano*. And, of course, there was also much prayer. Pastor Miranda expected that their "promotion blitz" would continue

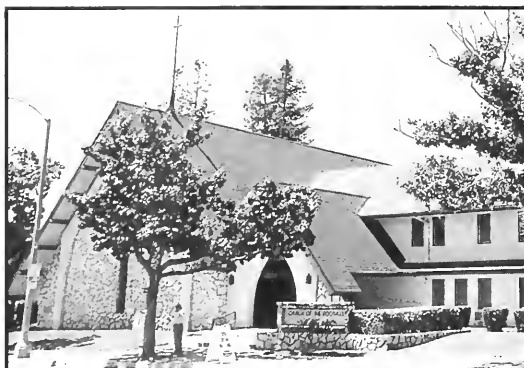
to bear fruit in the weeks following the opening service.

Immediately after Birth Sunday, the core group began making plans to begin two new cell groups in the homes of some of the people who came. Pastor Miranda said, "We have a lot of work ahead of us," but he notes, "Everyone is very enthused and wanting to work." And he adds, "We need your prayers for this church-planting effort." [✠]

— Richard C. Winfield



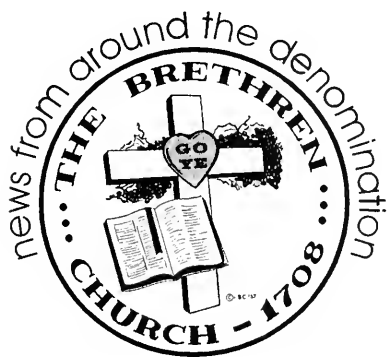
Above, a few of the people who attended the Easter Sunday service of *Centro Cristiano Para la Familia*; right, some of the folks who attended the Good Friday service; above right, the beautiful Church of the Foothills where the new church holds its Sunday services (Sunday school at 11:30 a.m.; worship at 12:30 p.m.).



Good Friday evening. Attendance for this event was around 60, in spite of bad weather (a storm watch was in effect that evening and rain began falling about an hour before starting time—unusual in Southern California at this time of year). Not only was the attendance good in view of the weather, but following the film, when an invitation was given for people to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, 12 prayed for the forgiveness of their sins.

music, with both doing a great job according to Pastor Miranda. Several more people accepted the Lord during this service.

Pastor Miranda notes that all weekend people were calling to ask about the church and to get directions. Even late Sunday evening a man called asking for counseling, since he and his wife had recently separated and had begun divorce proceedings. At first the man could not understand how the "priest"



More than 1000 are registered to go to Estes Park in August

Ashland, Ohio — More than 500 adults and over 500 youth have registered for General Conference and the BYIC Convention to be held August 7–11 at Estes Park, Colo.—making this the largest Conference/Convention in recent years.

The May 19 deadline to register to stay in one of the Conference lodges has passed, but people planning to stay off-site or to visit the Conference a day or two can still preregister and pay the facilities fee. (This \$6.00-per-day fee can also be paid at the Estes Park Center administration office at time of arrival by anyone who cannot preregister).

The deadline to register for the BYIC Convention has also passed, but National Youth Leader Jaime Gillespie says she may still have a few spots available. Any unregistered young person who wants to attend should call Jaime immediately.

All registered Conference attendees will receive a special mailing by the end of June with lodge room number and other important information. [†]

South American Theological Seminary Library Project

As of April 30, \$9,291 had been given for books for the South American Theological Seminary in Argentina. This includes \$3,288 from a 1998 General Conference offering and \$3,200 from the National W.M.S. in 1999. Much of the rest came in response to a matching-gift challenge made by two Pennsylvania laymen. Thank you to all who have given.

More funds are needed. Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez recently estimated that 3000 volumes are still needed to meet minimum requirements. Details of a plan from the Cheyenne Brethren Church to raise the money will be sent to pastors in June and shared in the next EVANGELIST.

Leading the church into the future is focus of retreat for Brethren pastors and spouses

Nashville, Ind. — Approximately 35 Brethren pastors and elders and 25 ministry wives took time away from their usual responsibilities to enjoy a time of fellowship, worship, inspiration, challenge, and relaxation at the annual Brethren Pastors and Spouses Retreat. The theme of the retreat, held May 9–11 at the Brown County State Park near Nashville, Indiana, was “Leading the Church into the Future.”

Dr. Charles Lake, senior pastor of Community Church of Greenwood, a congregation near Indianapolis that averages more than 1,500 for worship, was the guest speaker for the retreat. In his first message, “Ministry in the 21st Century,” he sketched some of the challenges facing pastors at the beginning of the new century. Among these are the demise of small churches and the rise of mega-churches; conflicts over worship style; Godless “spirituality”; defining commitment in terms of convenience; and a smorgasbord mentality about the church (What’s in it for me?).

To face these 21st-century challenges, Lake recommended three first-century (New Testament) approaches: (1) “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). “Today more than ever people need to hear the Word,” Dr. Lake said. (2) “Be shepherds of God’s flock” (1 Pet. 5:2). “Don’t fail in pastoral care. People with needs who don’t get help will go somewhere else,” he commented. (3) “Prepare God’s people for works of service [ministry]” (Eph. 4:12). “Disciple people and get them involved in ministry,” he said.

In his second message, which he entitled “Besides Everything Else” (see 2 Cor. 11:28), Dr. Lake looked at “other things pastors encounter”—the magnitude of ministry responsibility; the weight of people’s expectations; the gamut of human emotions; criticism; and their own humanity. The antidote to all these, he suggested, is to “fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen” (2 Cor. 4:18). He also advised pastors to exercise the disciplines they



Dr. Charles Lake drew heavily on writings from the first century as he talked to pastors and their spouses about ministry in the 21st century.

tell their people to practice—abiding in the Word, reading devotional writers, spending quiet times with the Lord. He added, “Seeing people growing in the Lord is a blessing that makes it all worthwhile.”

In line with the retreat theme, Dr. Dan Lawson, Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the pastors and elders on “Ministry in the Coming Age.” He began by saying, “The ministry you were trained to do in seminary is not the ministry the world is looking for today.” This is because our world is changing so rapidly.

Lawson noted, for example, that people are constantly exposed to television, movies, creative commercials, the Internet, and videos. People today, especially young people, don’t get much of their information from lectures and sermons. A multimedia approach is therefore essential for effectively communicating the Gospel to today’s world, he said. We must not change the message, but we do need to change our methods of presenting the message.

While the men were in this session, their wives (“Ministry Wives”) were having a session of their own. They began with a time of worship, and then Mesu Andrews led a devotional centered on the theme that one’s relationship with the Lord can be

(continued on next page)



Roann First Brethren Church to mark 120 years of ministry

The **First Brethren Church of Roann, Ind.**, will commemorate 120 years of ministry on Sunday, June 25, with a day of celebration, fellowship, and remembering. The celebration will include worship at 10:00 a.m., a carry-in meal (with meat and drink provided) following the worship service, and a special service in the afternoon. All former pastors, attendees, and others who would like to come are invited to attend this special event.

Pastors retreat

(continued from page 9)

likened to "dancing with God." A demonstration was also given of the new Brethren Ministry Wives website. *(Information about this will be mailed to Ministry Wives.)*

Dr. Lawson also made a presentation to both the pastors and the Ministry Wives on "Stress in the Parsonage." He focused on how people of various personality types handle stress differently, and how understanding this can help us relate to someone under stress.

To conclude the retreat, Scott and Amy Ailes led a time of worship that included both group singing and special numbers by Scott and Amy. Scott serves as worship leader for the contemporary worship service at the Napanee, Ind., First Brethren Church, and both he and Amy are accomplished musicians. Following this time of worship, Scott and his coworker, Tom Hubbard, presented a session on sound systems and on issues to consider when purchasing a sound system for a local church. Both Scott and Tom are employed at The Woodwind and the Brasswind, a large music center in South Bend, Ind.

Next year's retreat will be held March 13-15 at Stonecroft Retreat Center in Hollister, Missouri, just outside Branson.

— reported by Richard Winfield

Senior Citizen Sunday at St. James Brethren Church celebrated with a county fair theme

St. James, Md. — Senior Citizen Sunday was observed Sunday, February 27, at the St. James Brethren Church with a county fair theme.

Like other county fairs, this one had a "tractor pull," watermelon-eating contest, and a milking contest (using a paper cow with a rubber udder!).

There was also an exhibit of home made cakes, pies, jellies, and jams, provided by members of the congregation. These were judged and then auctioned off. The top bid-

getter was Althea Rases's coconut custard pie, which went for \$90. In all, the auction raised more than \$500, which went to the church's Project 2000 Building Fund for an addition to the church building.

Entertainment was provided by a barbershop quartet and by some of the young people of the church, who performed a square dance. The seniors in attendance were also able to entertain themselves by taking part in games of ring toss, milk



Entertainment for the St. James Seniors was provided by singers (above, l. to r.) Joe Schnebly, Mike Starliper, Tim McMillan, and Jim Swisher; and by square dancers (at left, l. to r.) Sierra Hite, Jason McMillan, Kristin Maginnis, and Matt Rouse (and by other young people not shown).



bottle drop, and bushel basketball drop, or by competing in a marble-shooting contest.

Sandra Culler, who reported the event, summed it up this way: "It was indeed a fun-filled time as we honored our seniors, who have served faithfully over the years the once-existing little weather-board church that stood on the hill in St. James and which now sits on another site nearby, made of bricks, mortar, and love." [✠]

Check for India

Ashland, Ohio — Ann DeVeny recently presented a \$2,000 check from the Northgate Community Church of Manteca, Calif., to Missionary Ministries Director Reilly Smith. The money will be used to pay for construction of a village church building for Brethren Mission of India.

The Northgate Brethren, who recently had some repair work done on their own church building, were challenged by the idea that for \$2,000 they could pay for construction of an entire church building in India. Most of the \$2,000 was received



in one special offering. Mrs. DeVeny's husband, Dr. Dan DeVeny, served until June as pastor of the Northgate Church.

Ashland's Park Street Brethren Church is a "seven-day-a-week neighborhood of faith"

The following article appeared in the March 20, 2000, issue of the Mansfield, Ohio, **News Journal**. It was written by **News Journal** reporter Ron Simon. It is reprinted here by permission. (Photos by Richard Winfield)

Ashland, Ohio — On a Thursday morning at the Park Street Brethren Church, this neighborhood of faith is a busy place.

More than just a church, or a worship center as it is now called, this is a community of buildings filled with activity.

The ladies of the sewing group have their own workroom and are busy turning out quilts, baby blankets and clothing that will go to a mission in Kentucky, an

idea of God as both taskmaster and friend.

Later in the day, basketball players will show up for a workout in the gymnasium.

On other days, people will gather in classrooms to watch their weight, deal with the sorrow of divorce, study the Bible, practice



Above, Renee Ward helps some of Park Street School's kindergarten students with their reading. At left, (l. to r.) Alice Ingraham, Kathy Mack, and Gloria Albrecht work on sewing projects. Far left, these men get together at six o'clock on Tuesday mornings to play basketball in Park Street's gymnasium.



Indian reservation in Montana and to a young couple in Ashland.

In the classrooms, 5-year-old Dante Smith is grinning as he uses his mouse to tour "The Magic School Bus in the Ocean."

Just off the huge gymnasium, MOPS—Mothers Of Preschoolers—is having a meeting.

In his book-lined, second-floor study, the Rev. Arden Gilmer works on next Sunday's sermon. In a cluttered room that seems designed for thinking, Gilmer is working on the

their choir singing or have dinner together.

"We're a seven-day-a-week church," Gilmer said. "Something is always going on or going through here every day."

Now in his 21st year at Park Street, Gilmer said Sunday is still this neighborhood's biggest day.

Average worship attendance is more than 600, and Sunday school brings 440 people together.

This is an older church. "Birthed," Gilmer said, on the campus of Ashland College in 1879. The brick church on Park Street was built in 1920. The attached Christian Education Center was built in the 1960s, and the Family Life Center in 1995.

Even though Gilmer is assisted by pastors Bob Buford, Don Belsterling and Sherry Van Dwyne, the church recently hired Dan Phillip as operations manager.

This neighborhood of faith keeps getting bigger and busier.

When they aren't making quilts or blankets, the ladies of the Sewing Group enjoy lots of talk. "We're just a small part of the whole thing but we do a lot of work," Marceal Zimmerman said. Marjorie Meyer said some of the products of the group's work go to a Blackfoot reservation in Montana where her daughter once taught school.

The two are joined by Alice Ingraham, Kathy Mack, and Gloria Albrecht.

"We were once a pretty large group," Zimmerman said. "Now so many women are working."

But this group works, too, turning out items that could wind up at nearby Dale-Roy School.

In the day-care center across the hall, the 5-year-olds in Renee Ward's kindergarten class were creating a rain forest in their room with colored bits of paper. "There are monkeys and birds and butterflies and

(continued on next page)



Gretna Brethren Church is active in the Lord' service

Bellefontaine, Ohio — The past half year has been an active time for the Gretna Brethren Church, according to Gretna member Betty Deardurff.

In mid-December the Power Team came to Bellefontaine, with a number of Gretna people attending their presentations. The Power Team is a group of dedicated Christian men who demonstrate physical strength by bench-pressing huge logs, rolling frying pans like tortilla shells, and breaking walls of ice. As they do so, they share the Gospel and their Christian testimony, making for a powerful presentation. Hundreds from the community made decisions for Christ at the gatherings.

Also in December, just before Christmas, the Gretna Brethren distributed *JESUS* videos house-to-house in a ten-mile square surrounding their church building. They gave out a total of 700 videos in this rural community.

The Gretna Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) group has been hosting "Fire Escape," a gathering of young people of the community for games, fun, worship, and a speaker. Held once a month in the Gretna Church facilities, around 40 youth usually come, with as many as 60 in attendance on occasion.

Ten Gretna BYIC members traveled to the Smithville Brethren Church for a spring youth rally and came home with the traveling Ohio BYIC plaque. Then 40 youth and adults from Gretna headed to Detroit for "Stand Up!"—a huge youth rally in the Pontiac Silverdome. Sponsored by Teen Mania Ministries, Stand Up! included top-name speakers (Josh McDowell, Ron Luce, Reggie White) and great bands (the Newsboys, Rebecca St. James, and the O.C. Supertones).

Other special events at the Gretna Church included the baptism of five people in February and a church birthday party that same month with about 100 people of all ages attending for the celebration. In addition to these special events, the congregation—under the leadership of Pastor Lynn Mercer and Ministry Associates Jamie Hurley and Julie Weiskittle—has been growing spiritually through Bible study, worship, prayer, and fellowship. Says Mrs. Deardurff, "We are celebrating the love of our God together." [†]



*Brethren lady **María Miranda**, seen here with her husband **Juan** (l.) and with the president of National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), received two awards in February for her Spanish radio ministry, "Para Ti Mujer." On February 6, she received the NRB's Milestone Award (shown), given to religious radio programs that have aired for at least 20 years. Mrs. Miranda is the first to receive this award for a Hispanic radio program. Then on February 24, Excellence in Media of Hollywood awarded Mrs. Miranda—for the second year in a row—its prestigious Angel Award, recognizing "Para Ti Mujer" as the most outstanding radio program in its category.*

Park Street Church

(continued from page 11)

bugs," a happy Cody Holcomb said as he hung green strips of paper from a string that represented the forest's canopy. "And leopards, too," he said.

In several rooms preschoolers were exercising, coloring, eating and sometimes napping, depending on the schedule. Ward said not all the children come from Park Street families. "Some parents decided this is a good place for their children to be," she said.

There were children running in the gymnasium and playing with toys while MOPS met in a classroom. "We do a book study," Stephanie Gravitt said. "It's a parenting book called *Boundaries With Kids*. It's Bible-based." She said that while moms learn more about their trade, a couple of baby-sitters keep an eye on the kids.

Susan McGovern of Ashland, who works three days a week doing med-

ical records at MedCentral/Mansfield Hospital, said, "This does wonders for me. It's helping me to be a better mother. It's good just to be around other mothers."

Sometime in the afternoon, long after the MOPS, the small children and the Sewing Group, have gone home, the basketball players break sweat in the gym. Many, like Greg Lattanzi, a freshman at Columbus State, come here during spring break. Lattanzi, who is headed for the Marine Corps, was baptized at Park Street just a couple of months ago.

In addition to basketball, he and some other players would attend "The Crossing" with the Rev. Don Belsterling. "It's a service for people who don't normally go to church," Lattanzi said. "It's upbeat and youthful."

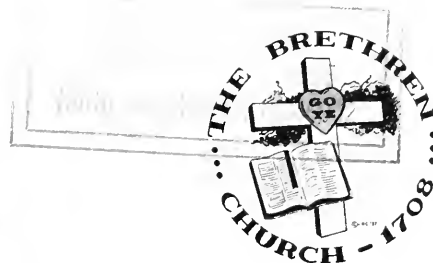
But soon the basketball players would clear out. There was a banquet in the works. Just another event at one of Ashland's busiest neighborhoods. [†]

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A newsletter for Brethren people

July/August 2000

Celebrating a Century of Brethren Foreign Missions

By Dale R. Stoffer

THIS SEPTEMBER The Brethren Church will achieve a milestone that deserves celebration. That milestone is the 100th anniversary of missionary activity in The Brethren Church, which got its start in September 1900 with the formation of the Foreign Missionary Society.

The Foreign Missionary Society was the sole *foreign* missionary agency for The Brethren Church from 1900 through 1939. Following the division of the church in 1939, the Foreign Missionary Society went with the Grace Brethren. Nevertheless, a number of the influential officers and pioneer missionaries of the Society prior to the division were people who were committed to the "Ashland" Brethren. And the foreign-mission compulsion of the Society was carried on in our denomination by the Missionary Board and now by its successor, the Missionary Ministries Council.

This article will provide an overview of foreign mission activities that have resulted as a consequence of the formation of the Foreign Missionary Society. Those activities form an exciting chapter in the history of The Brethren Church.

Background of the Society

Even before the formation of The Brethren Church in 1883, our parent denomination, the German Baptist Brethren Church, had started foreign mission work in 1876 in Denmark. The "Progressive Brethren," as we were known before the 1882 division, were strong advocates of all forms of mission (as were

many in the main body of the church, which became the Church of the Brethren in 1908).

Following the division in 1882 and the formation of The Brethren Church in 1883, the weighty task of reorganizing all aspects of church life caused the Brethren to be very slow in addressing foreign missions. At the 1892 General Conference, a National Mission



*Jacob C. Cassel,
"Father of Brethren
Foreign Missions"*

Board was organized, but it focused on home mission work. During the second half of the 1890s, agitation for foreign missions came from several different directions. A number of influential leaders in the church wrote and spoke about the great need and opportunity for foreign work. Among these leaders were Jacob C. Cassel (whose continual advocacy for foreign work earned him the title "Father of Brethren Foreign Missions"), Louis S. Bauman, J. Allen Miller, J.O. Talley, and C.F. Yoder.

In 1896 a Missionary Circle was formed at General Conference which passed a resolution "that we direct our attention to foreign missions." Churches began to hold missionary conventions (we would call them missionary conferences today) to generate enthusiasm for missions

among laity and pastors. The first was held at the Milledgeville, Illinois, Brethren Church in 1897.

In spite of the growing sentiment for foreign missions, many in the church were cautious or critical of such an effort. Their concern was that The Brethren Church needed to be more firmly established at home, and they feared that the church would overextend its limited resources by engaging in foreign work.

Organized "under the trees"

Those at the forefront of the push for foreign missions came to the 1900 General Conference determined to organize a foreign missions agency. Their desire to organize an agency within the structure of conference itself, however, was rebuffed. According to Louis S. Bauman's account, "The missionary enthusiasts were informed that there was plenty of room 'out under the trees' where they could go to effect their organization."

This is precisely what they did. On a little knoll to the north of the building where the conference was being held, 52 charter members

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is in the center of this issue.

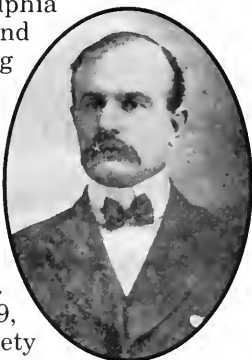
effected the organization of the Foreign Missionary Society. They adopted a constitution that had been drawn up by the president of Ashland College, J. Allen Miller.

The Society was affiliated with The Brethren Church as its agent in foreign missions, but the business of the Society was independent of General Conference. During the years 1909 to 1912, attempts were made to unify the work of the National Missionary Board and the Society. Unification was not realized, but in 1912 it was decided that the two organizations should hold joint meetings to coordinate their work.

Mission work in Persia

After its formation, the Society initiated a search for a promising mission field. In 1902 Louis S. Bauman became acquainted with Yonan Auraham, a Persian national. Auraham joined Bauman's congregation in Philadelphia

that year and began sharing his vision to return to Persia as a missionary with the backing of his new denomination. On August 29, 1902, the Society voted to "recognize the



need of missionary work in Persia," and it authorized Auraham to open a Brethren mission station in that country (present-day Iran).

Auraham returned to his homeland in 1903. He was to be joined there by another Brethren missionary, Alice Harley, but unfortunately

she died before leaving for Persia. The Persian work faced another severe difficulty: fighting between Turks and Armenians jeopardized the safety of missionaries there.

The Society decided to investigate the feasibility of continued work in the area. Charles (C.F.) Yoder, secretary of the Society, traveled to Persia in 1905, but his investigation was hampered by the warfare. His guarded assessment caused the Society to phase out its support of the Persian field by 1906. Auraham continued his work on a self-supporting basis until his death in 1915.

Canada

In 1902, The Brethren Church also assumed responsibility for mission work in Montreal, which had been founded by the German Baptist Brethren in 1899. In 1903, Vianna Detwiler began work at the mission, focusing on evangelizing the English-speaking population in the predominantly French-speaking city. Both C.F. Yoder and J.C. Cassel also served the mission. The work never became well-established, however, and it was closed in 1916.



Vianna Detwiler

Brethren missionaries to Canada

Vianna Detwiler
A.B. Maldeis
Charles and Pearl Yoder
Jacob Cassel
Mr. and Mrs. Morton Sands
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Broad

Argentina

The next Brethren mission field—and the first to result in a permanent Brethren presence—was Argentina. The Society invested greater research and planning into beginning this work than it had into the Persian work. Missionaries selected to begin this mission were C.F. and Pearl Yoder and Bertha Bell. They arrived in Argentina in 1909.

The Yoders chose Rio Cuarto, the capital of the province of Cordoba, as the site of the first mission work. Over the next 20 years they were joined by numerous other Brethren workers. The field progressed slowly but steadily, and by 1930 the Brethren had established 15 mission stations outside of Rio Cuarto.

At the time of the division in 1939, this work in Argentina remained with the Grace Brethren churches, which continued mission work there. Currently the church has 20 established congregations and 25 church plants, with a total average weekly attendance of 1,000.

Brethren missionaries to Argentina* (the original mission)

Bertha Bell
Charles and Pearl Yoder
Leonard and Maude (Cripe) Webb
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Atkinson
Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Bock
Clarence and Loree Sickel
Edwin and Muriel Boardman
Percy and Lora Yett
Johanna Nielsen
Laura Larson (Wagner)
Paul and Dortha Dowdy
Hill and Dorothy Maconaghy

*Only those who served or began serving before 1940 are listed.

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Pontius' Puddle

I WENT TO SEE MY PASTOR ABOUT MY ANXIETY ATTACKS. HE ASKED ME TO DESCRIBE MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FELLOW CREATURES AND MY HOPE FOR THE HEREAFTER.

AND?

HE WAS QUITE AMAZED THAT I HAVE OCCASIONAL MOMENTS OF CALM!



© Joel Kaufmann



Dr. Charles and Pearl Yoder and their family in 1928.

Africa

Brethren mission work in Africa owes much to the vision and perseverance of one man, James S. Gribble. In 1904 Gribble was converted under Louis S. Bauman's ministry at the Philadelphia First Brethren Church. He soon developed a burden for African missions, but the Brethren were marshalling their resources into opening the new field in Argentina. He therefore decided to serve with African Inland Mission (AIM) and in 1908 began ministry in what is present-day Kenya.

In 1913 Gribble married the very capable Florence Newberry, who had come to Africa on the same boat as Gribble and served at the same AIM mission station. Their joint burden became a region of French Equatorial Africa known as Oubangui-Chari (located in today's Central African Republic and partly in the Republic of Chad). Because AIM did



*Florence and James Gribble shortly after their wedding in 1913.**

not have work in this area, the Gribbles sought the sponsorship of the Brethren for opening this new field.

*Photo of the Gribbles reproduced from *Stranger Than Fiction*, © Foreign Missionary Society of the Grace Brethren Church; used by permission.

Even though this new field was approved in 1914, the outbreak of World War I and problems gaining entrance into French Equatorial Africa delayed the Gribbles' arrival until 1921. The work in Oubangui-Chari moved forward under the Gribbles' leadership. A

number of Brethren missionaries who went to this field succumbed to disease, however, including James Gribble himself in 1923.

Despite these hardships, this mission field has been one of the most successful for the Grace Brethren. In the Central African Republic, there are currently 837 Brethren churches and 60 additional "Points of Light" (meeting places), with a total membership of 194,360. In Chad there are an additional 120 churches (1999 figure), with a membership (1998 figure) of 15,500.

China

In addition to the successful mission work in Argentina and Africa, the Brethren also began a short-lived work in China. Although the Society did not officially approve China as a mission field until 1923, the Long Beach, Calif., First Brethren Church began supporting a missionary there in 1916. She was Rose M. Foulke, who worked in China under an independent faith mission.

In 1923 the Society approved Long Beach members Walter and Eleanor Elliott as missionaries to develop a church-planting effort in China. Another missionary, Alice Evans, went to China that same year. Despite a time of fruitful service, the mission closed in 1924.

After the division

One of the results of the heart-wrenching division within The Brethren Church in 1939 was, as noted earlier, the decision of the Foreign Missionary Society to affiliate with the Fellowship of (Grace) Brethren Churches. This meant that The Brethren Church had to rebuild its

Brethren missionaries to Central African Republic*

James and Florence Gribble
Estella Myers
Antoine and Mary Rollier
Myrtle Mae Snyder
Orville and Charlotte Jobson
Allen Bennett
Minnie Deeter
John and Carrie Hathaway
Chauncey and Hattie Sheldon
Florence Bickel
Mary Emmert
Lester and Minnie Kennedy
Elizabeth Tyson
Joseph and Rose Foster
Floyd and Ada Taber
Grace Byron
Edna Patterson
Mabel Crawford (Hamilton)
Curtis and Bertha Morrill
Jake and Freda Kliever

*Only those who served or began serving before 1940 are listed.

foreign missions program from the ground up.

At the 1940 General Conference, the Missionary Board was authorized to carry out foreign mission work for the denomination. (Ironically, this board had been chartered in 1892 to engage in both domestic and foreign work.) Most of the Argentine field went with the Grace Brethren, so one of the first actions of the board was to ask C.F. Yoder, who had retired to Ashland, Ohio, in 1937, to return to Argentina and to reestablish the work. His new focus became the cities of Rosario, Cordoba, and Buenos Aires.

Yoder followed the conventional missions wisdom of the day, which believed that mission work should be overseen by the missionaries. Yet,

Brethren missionaries to Argentina

(in the work begun after 1939)

Charles and Pearl Yoder
Robert and Jane Byler
June Byler
John and Regina Rowsey
Ken and Jeanette Solomon
Ray and Marilyn Aspinall
Juan Carlos and María Miranda
William and Fran Curtis
Mark and Chantal Logan
William and Sharon Winter
Allen Baer

to his credit, he believed in raising up Argentine workers to assist him, a practice that paid great dividends in producing many capable leaders.

The Argentine church now has 25 churches with several additional meeting places and a total membership of approximately 1,150. It is a missionary-minded church, sending personnel to work with Brethren missions in Paraguay (established by the Argentine church) and Colombia. In addition, Juan Carlos and María Miranda are products of the Argentine Brethren Church.

Nigeria

At the time of the division, the mission work in Africa also went with the Grace Brethren. In 1948 the Brethren returned to Africa, this time in cooperation with the Church of the Brethren in its work in northeastern Nigeria. The Church of the Brethren had opened this work in Nigeria in 1923, and it had experienced steady progress and growth. Veda Liskey of Harrisonburg, Virginia, was the



Veda Liskey

first of a number of Brethren Church missionaries to serve in Nigeria. In 1956 Brethren Church personnel extended the outreach of the mission among the Higi people.

The Lord has richly blessed the work of both Brethren groups in Nigeria. Today the church is self-governing and has (1998 figures)

Brethren missionaries to Nigeria*

Veda Liskey
Janet King
Robert and Beatrice Bischof
Doc and Jean Shank
Charles and Marguarite Kraft
Harold (Buzz) and Shirley Bowers
Larry and Rose Bolinger
Richard and Kay Winfield
Jerry and Cheryl Grieve

*Only missionaries from The Brethren Church (not those from the Church of the Brethren) are listed.

339 churches with a combined membership of 130,000–140,000 and a estimated average attendance of between 150,000–200,000.

India

A new chapter in Brethren Church missions has been the opening of mission fields through foreign nationals who have come for training at Ashland Theological Seminary. In 1970 K. Prasanth Kumar, a 1969 graduate of the seminary, began mission work on behalf of the Brethren in Rajahmundry, located in eastern India. Kumar has used a multi-faceted ministry to advance the cause of Christ: orphanages, medical ministry, vocational training, relief work, a Bible institute, and various forms of evangelism. For a time the Kumars were assisted by Prasanth's brother and sister-in-law, Vijay and Sujatha Kumar. And now the Kumars' son and daughter-in-law, Sudhir and Latha Kumar, are assisting with the work.

The mission has expanded to many villages and to the cities of Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Hyderabad. As of July 1999 Kumar had 212 pastors and evangelists sharing the ministry, and there were nearly 7,000 baptized members.

Malaysia

In 1974, upon graduation from the seminary, David Loi Lee-Hoot, a Malaysian-born man of Chinese descent, returned to Malaysia and began a Brethren work in Penang. Presently a co-worker, David Chew, leads the church in Penang, while David and Jenny Loi serve the church in Johor Bahru. Ministry in this heavily Islamic nation is difficult and has focused on the significant Chinese population.

Peru

Another Brethren work pioneered by a national missionary is that led by Miguel Antunez. A native of Peru, Miguel came to America where he was converted through the Hispanic ministry of former Brethren missionary Ken Solomon in Sarasota,

In 1983 Brethren mission work was begun in Bolivia by Bolivian national Vidal Juarez and his family. They later left The Brethren Church, and the work ceased.

Florida. Miguel attended Ashland Theological Seminary for one year but was forced to return to Peru due to immigration restrictions. In 1991 Miguel began a Brethren mission in Lima, Peru. The church has outgrown its present facility and is in the process of completely renovating the building (*see page 13*).

Colombia

During the last 30 years the spotlight of Brethren missions has focused especially on Latin America. The Missionary Board opened a new mission in Colombia in 1974 when Ken and Jeanette Solomon began work in Medellín. In 1984 Mark and Chantal Logan helped open a new

Brethren missionaries to Colombia

Ken and Jeanette Solomon
Carolyn Solomon
Mark and Chantal Logan
Robert and Juanita Dillard
David and Diane Kerner
Jeanne Bobenage
Tim and Janet Solomon
Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri

mission area in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. Though there are no American missionaries presently serving in Colombia, the Argentine Brethren are giving leadership to the church through Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri. There are presently three churches in Colombia with an average worship attendance of about 105.

Mexico

In 1979 Brethren mission work began in Mexico under the direction of Juan Carlos Miranda, who was "on loan" from The Brethren Church to the Fuller Evangelistic Institute in Pasadena, California. Work began that year in Tijuana (since closed) and Mexico City. Both Brethren missionaries and Mexican nationals have continued to provide

Brethren missionaries to Mexico

Juan Carlos and María Miranda
Tom Saunders
Tim and Jan Eagle
Todd and Tracy Ruggles
Jennifer Thomas

leadership for this promising mission field. There are currently six congregations with a total average worship attendance of about 250.

Paraguay

The Argentine church has developed a commitment to foreign missions in recent years as well. We have already noted the work of the Ferreris in Colombia. In 1987 the Argentine church also spearheaded mission work in Paraguay. The Juan Anzulovich family was called to begin a ministry in Asunción, the capital. This ministry, which averages about 50 in Sunday worship attendance, continues under the ministry of Claudio and Karina Castelli.

As with all ministry, foreign mission work in The Brethren Church has had its advances and declines. Yet God has promised that his Word will never return to him void (Isa. 55:11). All work on behalf of the kingdom must be done in light of this promise; otherwise we could easily become discouraged.

God's faithfulness

God's faithfulness in blessing the commitment of the Brethren to missions can be seen in several recent developments: the Argentine church becoming a sending church for missionaries; membership and worship attendance in our foreign fields about to surpass membership and worship

attendance of our church in America; God's use of the seminary and of key individuals as instruments to challenge nationals to consider mission work. May the words "GO YE" that occupy such a prominent place in the Brethren seal continue to occupy just as prominent a place in the life of The Brethren Church during the next century of Brethren missions. [†]

Dr. Stoffer is Professor of Historical Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary and chair of the Missionary Ministries Council of The Brethren Church.

Editor's note: If, despite our diligent efforts, the name of any Brethren missionary was omitted, please know that it was unintentional. Please inform the editor of any such omissions.

General Conference Offerings

BRETHREN attending General Conference will be challenged with opportunities to share in the funding of four significant projects in The Brethren Church when Conference offerings are taken during the four evening worship services.

In past years a number of Brethren who have not attended General Conference have indicated a desire to participate in the Conference offerings. In order that anyone whom God so leads may participate in these offerings, and in order that those who attend General Conference may come prepared, information about the offerings is presented here.

Monday's offering will provide start-up costs for Brethren Service Corps, a new ministry that will make arrangements for Brethren people to serve in short-term mission and service projects. Possible assignments might include accounting services, administrative assistance, teaching, construction, disaster relief, and much more. Assignments could last from a month to a year. Brethren Service Corps members will raise their own support, receive orientation and training, and serve in a variety of ministries in the United States or other countries. The goal of this offering is \$12,000 to provide staffing, resources, and training opportunities to launch this ministry.

Tuesday's offering will provide scholarships for Brethren churches

to participate in *Renewing Pastor and People*, the church renewal and redevelopment process presented at Ashland Theological Seminary (see article on pages 9 and 11). The goal of this offering is \$10,000 to provide scholarships for ten churches to participate in this process.

Wednesday's offering will provide funds to remodel the building purchased by South American Theological Seminary in Colón, Argentina (see interview on pages 6 and 7). The building is spacious and sound, but it needs some repairs, remodeling, cleaning, and painting. It will house the library, offices, and several classrooms. At least \$15,000 is needed to get this work underway.

Thursday's offering will provide funds to recruit and help train ten new church planters. Six new churches begun over the last 2½

years have led more than 100 people to faith in Jesus Christ and have introduced about 600 new attenders to The Brethren Church. Approximately \$12,000 is needed to help identify, recruit, and train ten more church planters over the next year.

If you do not plan to attend General Conference but desire to participate in these offerings, you may send your offering to the Conference with a delegate from your church. Or you may mail your check directly to General Conference Offerings, The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

All checks should be made payable to The Brethren Church. Please indicate in the memo section of your check for which offering it is to be used; or attach a note to the check explaining how the amount is to be divided among the offerings. [†]

General Conference evening worship: "C'mon down!"

This year's Conference in Estes Park will provide an exciting and unique opportunity for every one of us to join together in the worship of our Lord. In preparing the music for evening worship, we have taken great care to arrange a comprehensive blend of hymns and praise songs that we hope will encourage our brothers and sisters of all ages to seek God's presence.

To enhance this opportunity, each night we will be extending an open invitation for those who feel so led to

join together with the worship team in voice from the stage area. We will be providing lyrics for all who are inclined to "C'mon down." Best of all, you don't need to prepare or sign up. All you need to do is follow the call of the Spirit.

The adult and youth sessions will be combined on Tuesday evening and Friday morning. You will receive additional information regarding the worship agenda when you arrive at Estes Park.

We look forward to worshipping together in the splendor of God's creation!

— Jim Frado, Worship Coordinator

Getting to Know Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez

An Interview by Tim and Janet Solomon

Many of you had the opportunity to meet Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez while they were in the United States from 1995 to 1997 studying at Ashland Theological Seminary. Due to numerous requests for more information about this fine couple, we offer the following interview, straight from Argentina. The interview was done by Tim and Janet Solomon, who were in Argentina this spring as visiting professors at the South American Theological Seminary. It was a special privilege for the Solomons to teach at the seminary, for it was originally founded many years ago as Eden Bible Institute by Tim's father, Ken Solomon, on the camp property where Tim was raised.

Tim: It is a personal joy for me to see Eden Bible Institute re-emerging as a seminary. Eduardo, what roles do you and Mariela play in this exciting new venture?

Eduardo: The project to revive Eden Bible Institute was a challenge that Mariela and I accepted while we were studying at Ashland Theological Seminary. The combination of the need for leadership development in Argentina and the need for a Brethren seminary, in addition to

the call of God, resulted in the formation of the Seminario Teologico Sudamericano (South American Theological Seminary, STS).



Mariela and Eduardo Rodriguez (r.) and baby Camila Laura, with Eduardo's parents, Rev. Eduardo (Sr.) and Norma Rodriguez.

Fred Finks, Reilly Smith, and Emanuel Sandberg played crucial roles in getting this project off the ground. We believe that they were the instruments God used to open the doors of this seminary in Argentina. In addition to these three, we could name literally hundreds of people who were also used as instru-

ments of God when we remember the tremendous offering that was raised for STS at the 1997 General Conference in South Bend, Indiana.

Mariela and I have the privilege of being the directors of STS. I am involved mainly

in the academic part of the work, and Mariela takes care of the administrative duties. But since we are the only staff members during these first few years, the two of us are involved in all areas.

We have designed a three-year curriculum which students can study by extension. We began in 1998 with about 120 students. The study program combines classes of three months together with three-day intensives. These classes are taught by professors from Ashland

Theological Seminary and by Brethren pastors as part of the support we receive from the U.S. for our seminary in Argentina.

Tim: What is your vision for the seminary?

Eduardo and Mariela: Our vision for STS is that it would be an institution of Christian formation for the South American leader. Since its formation, STS has had a vision that includes all of South America. Until now, classes have been held only in Argentina, but we soon hope to extend ourselves to Paraguay and Colombia. We have found that in these two countries there are people who are interested in preparing for Christian ministry in their own countries.

We have had students from The Brethren Church in Argentina as well as from other denominations. We will continue to have this interdenominational vision.



Eduardo Rodriguez (l.) talks with students in one of the classes of the South American Theological Seminary.

From the beginning, part of our vision was to have our own building. After investing time and prayer in searching for the appropriate place and in raising the necessary funds, we can finally rejoice that STS has its own property. On Sunday, May 21, STS acquired a small property located in a strategic part of the city of Colón. We praise God for this historic day. All this has been made possible thanks to a loan provided by the church in the United States and the important donation of a couple who is committed to supporting the ministry of STS.

We continue working at raising funds for this property and for the needed improvements. In this building we will have space for offices, a library, classrooms, a conference room, and enough space to house students. We take this opportunity to thank brothers and sisters who

have, through their generous donations, made possible the purchase of books, and who are committed to meeting the costs associated with creating a library, which is required to obtain academic accreditation.

Jan: I came home from Argentina with three scrapbooks of pictures, but the most-requested photo has been one of your new baby. Please tell us about Camila Laura.

Mariela: In order to tell you about Camila, we would need another whole article. But I will limit myself to just a few words. Camila Laura Rodriguez was born March 17, 2000, at 5:10 p.m. The Lord has blessed our home with this precious baby, who has filled our days with tenderness and love. Camila arrived in a very special moment for us, since our families were in the midst of intense trials. Our prayer has been answered: she is an instrument of peace and of divine comfort.

Jan: Eduardo, how is the health of your mother? How can we pray specifically for her?

Eduardo: My mother, Norma Rodriguez, is seriously ill and requires intensive medical treatment. She travels 90 minutes daily for treatment, and once a week she journeys three hours to Buenos Aires to receive chemotherapy. She has endured two successful operations to remove tumors.

Due to these treatments, she is very weak and is in need of your prayers. Please pray especially that our Lord will renew her physical strength and guide the doctors regarding her treatment. Norma and her husband, co-pastors of the church at Colón, are very grateful for the prayers of brothers and sisters around the world, as well as for the cards and letters she has received.

Tim and Jan: The church at Colón is really growing. Please

share the exciting details with us, and especially the prayer room where people uphold those taking part in the service.

Eduardo and Mariela: The church in Colón is the largest Brethren church in Argentina, and it is involved in various areas of ministry in the city and beyond. We believe that its commitment to social work is one of the main strengths of this ministry.

In addition to our centrally located Sanctuary of Faith, the Colón church has nine annexes around the city. These annexes are centers of evangelization and social work. In three of these centers people can receive medical attention, and between 85 and 100 children are fed every weekday. The church also provides clothing and food to various families in the city. All this work takes place thanks to the donations of brothers and sisters from different churches in Argentina and around the world. This is crucial since the church receives no government aid.

Regarding the prayer room, it is a very special place located directly below the pulpit area. In that room, prayer warriors gather during each service, especially while the Word of God is being preached. Because of the room's location, the preacher can hear the murmur of the prayers being lifted on his behalf while he preaches.

Tim and Jan: Will we see you at General Conference this year?

Eduardo and Mariela: Yes, the Lord willing, the three of us will plan to be there, along with the worship team from the Colón church. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the brothers and sisters who have sent us greetings of encouragement. It is very special for us to receive news from our friends in the U.S. [✞]



Tim and Janet Solomon in Rosario, Argentina, where Tim grew up.

The Solomons are not strangers to South America. Tim lived in Argentina from age 2 through 16, then went with his parents, Rev. Kenneth and Jeanette Solomon, to Colombia, where they began a new Brethren mission work. Some years later Tim returned to Colombia with Jan, where they served as Brethren missionaries in Bogotá.

Tim and Jan currently serve as Marketing Directors for Campus Crusade for Christ at the Campus Crusade international headquarters in Orlando, Fla. In addition, Tim serves part time as associate pastor of the Sarasota First Brethren Church, where Jan's father, the late Dr. J.D. (Bud) Hamcl, served as pastor for many years.

Physical Health: A Spiritual Matter

By Rich Rader

WITH OUR fast-paced, high-tech society, daily planners with every minute scheduled, and fast-food menus being the number-one source of nutrition in America, is it any wonder that as a nation we are in such poor physical health? Statistics show that heart disease is the number-one cause of death among adults in the U.S. And recently, a report came out saying that obesity among youth is at an all-time high.

Why? In our country we simply do not take time to eat right and to exercise as we should. As a result, our bodies are abused and damaged.

Stewardship is a topic that is discussed on an ongoing basis in our churches. But most of our conversations about stewardship focus on just two areas, time and money. I believe that we must be good stewards of our time and our treasure, as the Bible teaches. Yet there is one topic often left out of this discussion that is equally important to our Christian stewardship, and that topic is our physical health.

Temples of the Holy Spirit

I believe that as Christians we must be good stewards of our physical bodies so that we will have the physical health we need to serve Christ. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 we read, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" Although Paul in this passage is speaking specifically about sexual immorality as an offense against the body, I believe we can understand from this that anything we do that causes damage to our physical bodies is doing damage to the temple of the Holy Spirit.

In many ways it is ironic that I am the one writing this article, because of the way I lived for most of my 28 years. Many of you reading this article may know me from my music ministry with Vision Ministries Inter-

national. If so, you know that I spent years abusing my body. As a result, I reached a top weight of 340-350 pounds; I wore a 4X shirt and size 56 pants; and exercise was simply not a word in my vocabulary.

A serious health situation

Then in April 1999 I was diagnosed with type II diabetes, with my blood sugar level near 400. Realizing this as a serious health situation and that diabetes can have perilous long-term effects, I knew that my



lifestyle must change. I also realized that I could not make those changes by myself. I needed God's help.

So my physical health became a spiritual matter. I sought God, asking Him to change my attitude toward physical health—toward both eating and exercise. I prayed that I might have the strength to take care of myself so that I could serve Him in accordance with His call.

Little did I know how drastically God would change me when I committed my physical life to Him and became a steward of my body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. God in His wonderful faithfulness answered my prayer literally *overnight*. My life was changed as God eliminated my desire for junk food and increased my desire to exercise.

In the days that followed, I devel-

oped a healthy eating plan of less than 50 grams of fat and 225 grams of carbohydrates per day. I also exercised six days a week. The exercise program includes cardiovascular workouts along with strength training at the MedCentral Health and Fitness Center in Mansfield, Ohio.

As a result, I currently weigh 219 pounds and wear an XL shirt and size 38 pants. My blood sugar has averaged 87 over the last three months (80 to 120 is normal). Also, as a new associate pastor at Living Waters Community Church, a Brethren church-plant in Mansfield, I have noticed a wonderful increase in energy with which to serve the Lord.

The most important result, however, is not the way I eat nor the way



Before and after photos: at left, Tiffany and Rich Rader when they were married in October 1996; above, Tiffany and Rich in a recent photo.

I exercise. It is that God has enabled me to realize that my physical health is a spiritual matter. I challenge you to allow God to help you realize this truth as well. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Will God automatically change your attitudes toward eating and exercise overnight, as He did with me? I don't know. I won't promise that He will. One thing I do know, however, is that God is a faithful God who desires for us to be committed to Him 100 percent in every area of our lives. I can promise you that if you surrender your physical life to our loving Father, He will challenge you, strengthen you, and encourage you to grow in that area of your life in a way that will bring glory to His Name! [✠]

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



July-August 2000

Volume 13, Number 6

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies:

Today, as I write to you, I am looking out the kitchen window from a new perspective. I see an empty bird feeder, deck furniture in place, and a "backdoor" neighbor as he mows his lawn. It all looks a bit strange; but then it should. I am writing at Tracy's kitchen table, not my own.

While I am trying to collect my thoughts and get them down on paper, Don, my husband, is outdoors trimming trees and bushes, pulling weeds, planting flowers, and a number of other tasks on Tracy's "Dad-to-do" list. Oh, we poor abused retired parents! We came a few days early to see Tracy receive her Master of Arts degree in Clinical Pastoral Counseling from Ashland Theological Seminary (ATS).

As I look forward to her graduation, my mind wanders back 43 years to Don's graduation from ATS and 28 years ago when I received my Master's degree in Personnel Counseling from Wright State University. Both of these were great days!

When I graduated, Don, our two kids, my parents, and several friends were there to celebrate with me. While some "older" graduates chose not to participate in the commencement, I felt I owed it to David and Tracy to see me receiving my degree. Then they would understand those times with a baby sitter or when Dad did the cooking and nightly routines, instead of Mom.

(continued on page 4)

A FRIEND IS . . .

This spring when I cleaned some kitchen drawers, I found again the towel with this verse, which started my thinking.

FRIENDS

Like the sunshine after darkness
Or the daytime after night,
Like the rainbow after showers
Making everything all right,
Like the spring that follows
wintertime
With hopes that never end,
This comes to say
"May each new day
Bring joy to you . . .
My Friend."

Some routine jobs do not require mental ability—cleaning drawers is one of them—so my mind wandered to my friends and then to the biblical friends. Famous examples are David and Jonathan; Daniel, Hanaiah, Mishael, and Azariah (also known as Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego); Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; Jesus and the little children.

Circumstances which brought these friends together were varied, just as those for you and your friends. In many circumstances, the common bond is Jesus the Lord. We read in James 2:23 that "Abraham was God's friend!" We should all want this. Certainly we can talk with God, knowing that He is a confidante and encourager; He is always available and not too busy to listen. He is kind and loving, and never sarcastic. And He gives us good advice.

James alerts us in choosing our friends. "Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (4:4b). That is certainly a warning!

One without a friend becomes an

unhappy recluse, grumpy, selfish, and succumbs to self-pity, especially if he/she is an unbeliever. God designed us to need one another. The adage, "To have a friend, you must be a friend," is quite true. And a very good place to meet a friend is in church.

The church term is "fellowship." And, yes, we gather with others to study, visit, frequently to eat, and we call it "fellowship." To one outside the church, who may not understand this term, let's define it as "friends, fun, and food." That's what it's all about!

The book of *Ecclesiastes* relates the fun that two can have when they work together, encouraging another, and protecting another. Almost anything, especially work, is more fun when two are together; "there is strength in numbers," is another proven adage.

And being a helpful friend is an attribute to cultivate. In the book, *Resources for Worship*, I found this suggestion: "With God's guidance, pray about times or situations when you may be a better friend today. For example,

- in team games where there are some who are timid or do not play well,
- in the home, when someone is tired or cross,
- when you have work or worries and are tempted to complain or be grouchy,
- in study when, although you have finished preparing your lessons, a friend telephones for help,
- when in a group discussion you want your point to win so much that you are tempted not to think of others' opinions,

(continued on page 4)

READING BOOKS



When the W.M.S. board met, one item of business was to consider several books before recommending any for your reading during the 2000-2001 year. The Board recommends these five and, according to the commitments, each member is encouraged to read a minimum of two books for spiritual growth.

Several of you have suggested good books to Donna, and some of those suggestions are included.

Fiction

At Home in Mitford by Jan Karon; \$12.00

In the village of Mitford are Father Tim, the bachelor rector; a dog, the size of a sofa who moves in with him; an attractive neighbor who wears a path through the hedge; a lovable but unloved boy; a jewel theft; and a secret that's sixty years old! Father Tim gets more than he bargained for! This is a rich, proverbial comedy full of mysteries and miracles. This book is the first in a popular series of four.

Missions

Mission Possible by Marilyn Laszlo; \$10.00

This is the amazing story of the Wycliffe translator, Marilyn Laszlo, who dedicated her life to giving the Hauna tribe of New Guinea the Bible in their language. Marilyn and her friend, Judy, are constantly watched by 14 boys, who are interested in their food, their radio, and everything the women do. Those boys and the old "father of the village" become their friends and help to work out an alphabet for the Hauna language. How they all learn to read the Bible, accept the Christian faith, and spread it to others becomes "Mission Possible." Reference to this book was in *The Daily Bread*, December 2, 1999.

Non-Fiction

Sojourner Truth by W. Terry Whalin; \$4.00

Born a slave, Sojourner Truth

(1797-1883) spread the fires of freedom all the way to Congress and before two presidents. She became one of the first voices to acknowledge the link between the plight of slaves and that of American women. Having received a call from God, she preached her deeply-felt message: that people best show their love for God by their concern for others. From the pulpit or the podium, the wise and witty words, not to mention the electrifying presence of Sojourner Truth, brought audiences to their feet. The challenge to injustice issued by her stinging speeches has secured her a place in American history as a woman of courage and faith. This book is in the Heroes of the Faith series.

Inspirational

I'm Too Young to be This Old!
By Patricia "Poppy" Smith; \$9.00

What woman hasn't looked in the mirror and wondered who it was staring back at her? Or gasped at how grown up her children look? Or puzzled at how her friends are aging prematurely? It's often called the mid-life crisis, but Poppy Smith, born in England and married to an American physician, helps us see the lighter side of mid-life. In fact, *I'm Too Young . . .* offers us inspiration and insight to turn these middle years into the best years of our lives. Included are questions for reflection and scripture references for additional study.

How I Know . . . God Answers Prayer by Rosalind Goforth; \$4.00

This is a classic on prayer. We are taught that God answers prayer, but how do we know He actually does? The answer lies in a daily walk with the Lord, trusting Him to tenderly provide, protect, and care for even the smallest troubles of His people. This book is a compelling collection of the needs and struggles of Rosalind and Jonathan Goforth, pioneer missionaries to mainland China, and is their testimony of needs met and struggles overcome by God's power.

These books are available from Donna Stoffer, Literature Secretary, 1509 Old Post Road, Ashland, Ohio 44805. Send your check payable to National W.M.S. Literature with your order to Donna. Shipping and handling are free when you prepay.

Missionary Miscellany

David and Jenny Loi have moved. Their new address is 5, Jln. Rong-geng 13, Tmn. Skudai Baru, 81300 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia. This new location gives more space for their family and provides more space for their church. The church in Malaysia continues to grow and develop despite many challenges: a hostile government, a resistant population, and a struggling economy. Continue to pray specifically for David and Jenny and their children, Stephen and Rebecca.

Many of the national missionaries and the church planters will attend General Conference. Pray for their safety, good health, and spiritual renewal. Pray also for workers who remain at home.

In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

Miriam Garber Zercher was the oldest member of the Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland and a faithful and active member of the W.M.S. until her poor health limited her activity. Mrs. Zercher, 103, died in March on her birthday. Previously she filled several different offices in the local society and was a former member of the choir. Her faith and sincere trust in her Lord were daily reminders to others that she loved the Lord.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman (Joan) Ronk, Editor
1325 Coachman Court
Ashland, Ohio 44805

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Send all subscriptions to Mrs. Robert Kroft, 608 Twp. Road 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

Women's Outlook Newsletter

District Doings

Pauline Erbsen reported that the **Lanark Neoma Circle** had its public service in April. They were privileged to have Keith and Linda Immel and their children from North Manchester to share their experiences of the short-term mission trip to India last summer.

During the Sunday school hour, Immels showed a video of their work on building a home for homeless boys, ages 10-16. What a slow process compared to our building homes!

They displayed many handmade articles given to them by the Indian people. They spent several days with Prasanth and Nirmala Kumar and their family. Linda told about the sewing and typing classes, giving the women a means of earning money to support their families. These classes are free, in comparison with the government classes which charge the women students. Furthermore, when a woman graduates, the Brethren Mission gives her a sewing machine so she can begin her work.

The medical work is also free for the people who come miles to receive medical aid. Keith and Linda made us more aware of their needs and ways we can help, but especially with our prayers.

This certainly was an interesting time of sharing. We hope other churches invite the Immels to share their experiences.

Following the worship service, we enjoyed a fellowship meal together downstairs, which gave more time for visiting and learning about the Kumars' ministry in India.

The Neoma ladies enjoyed a dinner theater in May for their special day-out, and in June they presented a program at the nursing home.

Continuing in the **CENTRAL** district, the **Waterloo Hammond Avenue** ladies gave Christmas boxes, contributed proceeds from the rummage sale to the Red Cross disaster fund, and became secret pals to all their church children from kindergarten through 7th grade.

The **Cerro Gordo** society placed Christian children's books in the public library, held a baby shower

for the pregnancy center, adopted jr.-high students as secret pals, sponsored a Riverside School student, contributed to World Relief for Kosovo, rolled and sent bandages to India, and made lap robes for nursing homes. Busy ladies!

The **Mulvane** ladies in the **MIDWEST** district are well known for their Ugly Quilt sleeping bags. They gave 120 to the Union Rescue Mission and assisted in serving meals there. They contributed proceeds from a spaghetti supper, potato bake, and silent auction of three quilts for the district church planter.

And from **Falls City**, one of our "honorary" members, John Rieger, sent this report from the newspaper. Thank you, John.

At their May meeting, Karen Berry, the leader, gave the lesson on the importance of praise in our daily life. She emphasized that we need to remember to praise God, especially when surrounded by trials and difficulties.

On June 4 the ladies gave an open house entitled "First Brethren Church presents 'Thru the Artist's Eyes,'" which was an art exhibit to showcase the talents of those who attend church. This was an event open to the community.

The **FLORIDA** ladies in the two **Sarasota** societies filled shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child and Samaritan's Purse.

In the **PENNSYLVANIA** District, the **Sarver** society sent proceeds from a soup sale to World Relief, contributed to Riverside School faculty at Christmas, and sponsored a family in Haiti.

Highland sent an offering for the sewing machine project in India and gave financial support to a missionary to the Navajo Indians.

Johnstown II enjoyed a carry-in supper and auction for their Seminary offering and they had the "Thirty Pieces of Silver" project for David and Jenny Loi.

Main St. made and sold over 250 chicken pies and contributed their proceeds to Lost Creek.

Masontown focused on Ken-

tucky. A work team took clothes for the clothing store.

Valley supplemented their treasury by selling RADA knives, 2-year calendars, and greeting cards.

The W.M.S. **OHIO** District Conference was hosted by the Gratis ladies. The day was beautiful, the delicious lunch was served by the district youth, and the ladies gathered for a brief business meeting. Betty Deardurff presided.

The Bible study this year was the book of *Esther*, the Old Testament account of the Jewess who became queen. Betty reminded us that, like Esther, the Lord has put us here in such a time as this. Through the efforts of Esther and Mordecai, her uncle, the Jewish people were saved from annihilation. Those circumstances were unusual, but sometimes God uses unusual circumstances and us to accomplish His purpose. It is exciting!

Next year's Bible study is the book of *Philippians*. A suggested study guide is *God's Guide to Joy*, a Fisherman Bible Study Guide. Note, ladies, this is only a suggested guide. You may choose it, if you wish, for your study leader or choose another resource. The important part is to study and learn from *Philippians*.

The new two-year project for the district is to give support to the church plant in Delaware, Ohio. Jeff and Tracy Whiteside are the church planters. They covet our prayers.

Betty announced the fall retreat at Camp Bethany is Friday and Saturday, October 13-14. The theme is "Overcome or Overcomers."

Since many banks have increased their bank charges, it was suggested that the treasurers write one check for their offerings. Be sure to indicate the amount for each item, such as dues, project, or other funds.

The **INDIANA** district held three rallies in October 1999. The rallies are always a highlight of the fall. The themes were "In His Steps," "A Lamp unto My Feet," and "Hats Off to Jesus." A total of 153 ladies attended these rallies.

LOOK!

The Executive Board suggests that the district officers and local societies encourage the church plants to start a missionary society. It is up to each of us to welcome them into the women's ministry of the church. Near the back of the *Devotional Guide* is the Constitution, and at the end is the how to start a new organization. This is fulfilling Commitment 3, which reads "... support home and world missionaries, church planters, ..." Often they need finances and a W.M.S. friend.

Remember to send your project and thank offering checks to Joanne Kroft, if no one from your society attends Conference. Joanne's address is 608 Twp. Rd. 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

The 2-year project is funds to purchase a store front for worship in Malaysia, where David and Jenny Loi serve, and funds to enlarge the church building in Peru, where Miguel and Sonia Antunez serve. The thank offerings are designated for benevolences: Ashland Theological Seminary, World and Home Missions, Riverside Christian School, Campus Ministry, and a Scholarship at Ashland University.

Joan Merrill, the World Relief and Sewing Coordinator, reminds you to continue making quilt squares for next year's Conference quilt. Already she has received squares and other items for the auction. She is grateful!

Remember the guidelines for the squares:

- use all cotton fabric.
- the **finished** size of the square should be 8½". Please start with a square larger than 8½" so it isn't too small after doing the needlework. The design should be smaller than 8".
- use some form of needlework to make your design: cross-stitch, embroidery, or applique. Don't use fabric paints and similar methods. The needlework adds to the beauty of the finished project.

Send your squares and other items to:

Joan Merrill
9300 S SR 3
Muncie, IN 47302

The President's Pen (continued)

Then, again thinking back, I remember Mother's Day weekend in 1995 when we watched David walk across the platform of a huge Southern Baptist Church in Ft. Worth, Texas, to receive his Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In the audience that day were many friends, his wife Sheri, two sons, his in-laws, and his parents. In addition, Dave was ordained into the Christian ministry the next day.

That weekend was memorable! Just a few days earlier, Ft. Worth had suffered one of its famous hail storms. Since we flew down, we anticipated renting a car to drive, but there were none to be found! The hail had damaged hundreds of cars and everyone needed a rental. Because of this, the eight of us jammed into Dave's mini van!

This has been a busy spring and here is why. In late March we spent over two weeks in beautiful Anderson, South Carolina, staying with Davey, Jonathan, and Little Lady, their dog. We made new friends with the wonderful people of New Prospect Baptist Church, who are providing a lovely home for Dave and Sheri while they are on furlough.

Then we stayed with Cara, David Lee, and Chrissy, so Tracy and Jeff could attend the Spring Ministries Conference at ATS. Soon after, my sister, Marilyn, flew in from Florida to attend our high school alumni reunion. Later we spent three days in Brown County at the Brethren Pastors and Spouses Retreat.

Last week we accompanied the Senior Saints to the Tulip Festival in Holland, Michigan. Soon we will assist with the third- and fourth-grade camp at Camp Bethany. After that, it won't be long until we head toward Estes Park and General Conference. Who said retirement is boring?

I look forward to seeing many of you at Conference. Our program sounds innovative and exciting. We can expect to enjoy some spectacular scenery and to be drawn near to the heart of God.

Until then! In Christian Love,


Charlene

A Friend is . . . (continued)

— when you have spare time and are about to waste it, but remember suddenly a shut-in."

It is easy to plan fun things with your friends who are near. Consider your friends far-away and you seldom see, or whom you haven't met. A friend? Yes, you are bound together by God. Christ works through them and in them, just as in you and me. Send a prayer; God will deliver it with a blessing.

Usually there is a Bible reference at the beginning of a devotion in this column. You may choose to complete the sentence, "A friend is . . ." Then study your concordance to find appropriate Scriptures for yourself and your friends. Some of my favorites are in *Proverbs*. Sing a hymn to complete the devotions and pray for your friends. Be thankful for them and ask God's special blessing upon them.

The Editor's Ending

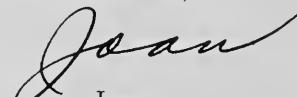
Dear Friend,

This *Newsletter* is a potpourri of activities of last year and reminders as we conclude the W.M.S. year and anticipate the blessings of General Conference. When we leave the mountain-top experiences, we will enter the valley to continue the work God has assigned. Even Peter didn't want to leave his mountain-top experience with Jesus, but he did. And so will we.

During the summer, vacations frequently take us to visit friends; and certainly at Conference we will see many. One special friend who won't be there in person is Shirley Black. She has promised us her thoughts and prayers, and we can do the same. Send a card to her at Kingston of Ashland, Box 347, Ashland, Ohio 44805.

Thanks for sending your news to me during the past year. I anticipate more reports to make this truly a newsletter of and for Women Meant to Serve.

Your friend,


Joan

Women's Outlook Newsletter

Renewing Pastor and People

By Alan Schmiedt

THE PEOPLE were excited, but the mood was bittersweet as good friends who had met scarcely a year before said goodbye. Most of them had been together only four times. But they knew that together they had made discoveries and embarked on journeys that would continue to change their lives and the lives of the churches from which they had come.

The occasion was the closing moments of the last module of a seminar at Ashland Theological Seminary entitled *Renewing Pastor and People*. It was an emotional experience to watch and listen as approximately 100 participants each in turn shared their prayers for their churches and had those prayers affirmed by the entire group.

Many of the people had driven more than eight hours to attend this final module. As the session ended, they were all tired. But when asked if they thought it had been worthwhile, they all answered with a resounding "Yes!"

A course on the cutting edge

The seminar—*Renewing Pastor and People*—was presented in five modules over the course of a year. It featured Dr. Terry Wardle and Dr.

Richard Parrott, two dynamic teachers in the fields of spiritual formation, leadership, and church re-



Dr. Richard Parrott (r.) offers encouragement as **Pastor T.J. McLaughlin** (2nd from r.) and **People** (l. to r., John and Vicki Winters, Teresa Hensley, and Nancy McGraw) from Pleasant View Brethren Church share their prayers for their church.

newal. They presented a course of study and practice for clergy and lay people designed to breathe new life into tired churches. It was a course on the cutting edge of what is happening in the world of Christianity at the beginning of the 21st century.

The first module was attended by just pastors and their spouses. It began with a time of worship, as did all the modules. After this the pastoral couples were guided through a

process of self-evaluation and personal assessment. Dr. Wardle and Dr. Parrott then helped them understand the dynamics of spiritual formation as they relate to pastoral ministry.

For the remaining four modules, lay leaders from each congregation accompanied their pastors. This made for a diverse group,

with people of various ages and cultural backgrounds, from several different denominations, and with different approaches to ministry.

Over the course of a year, these participants met quarterly to take part in a variety of learning experiences together. They studied such topics as the spiritual dimensions of ministry; designing a comprehensive prayer movement; developing a vibrant philosophy of ministry; set-

ting and reaching goals; equipping and empowering lay people for ministry; and designing dynamic worship services that glorify God and change people's lives.

When asked what one factor was the most important to the resounding success of the seminar, Dr. Parrott replied, "I think it would be the fact that the pastors and the lay people spent a year together developing their congregations' missions, visions, core values, and strategies. They learned and practiced working together and utilizing lay people in the ministry of the church."

What the Brethren said

Here is what some Brethren participants in the seminar had to say about *Renewing Pastor and People*:

Rev. T.J. McLaughlin, pastor of the Pleasant View Brethren Church of Vandergrift, Pa., said, "I believe it is essential training for every church in the denomination. It deals with foundational issues and helps a congregation build a firm foundation."

Rev. Bryan Karchner, pastor of the Three Seasons Community Church
(continued on page 11)



Pastor Jim Garrett (l.) and **People** (l. to r., Joyce and Rev. Bob Schubert and Steve Hollewell) of the Lanark First Brethren Church discuss the future of their congregation.



Brian Ronk — Continuing a Family Tradition at Ashland University

The following is an interview between Dr. Michael Gleason, Director of Religious Life at Ashland University, and Brian Ronk, a Brethren student on the Ashland campus.

Dr. Gleason: Brian, I have really enjoyed having you as a student at Ashland University. I know that Ashland University has also been "home" to a number in your family for an education, volunteer service, as well as employment. Introduce yourself and then briefly acquaint us with a bit of your family history as it relates to the university.

Brian: My name is Brian Ronk. I'm from Ashland, Ohio, and attend Park Street Brethren Church, where I serve as a volunteer with the youth ministry. In that capacity I help out with small groups and various other fellowship events, such as laser tag and retreats. At Ashland University I am a junior with a major in computer science and minors in biology, math, and religion.

There is almost no way to be brief about my family history as it relates to AU! All of my grandparents went here. Grandma [Joan] Ronk worked in the president's office and the

development office for many years, and Grandpa [Thomas] Stoffer served as a trustee for years until just recently retiring. My parents both went to AU, as well as all of my dad's siblings and all but one of my mom's. Mom works in the library, and both of her brothers are professors, one at the seminary and the other in the biology department. Both of my brothers as well as one cousin go here, with another cousin on the way next year. And that's just immediate family!

Dr. Gleason: I appreciate the deep roots that your family has in our institution, Brian! In terms of your immediate experience here, help our readers know more of how your time at Ashland has helped to develop both your mind and heart.

Brian: I've had various roles in the student organization HOPE Fellowship this year. The first role was serving as a student officer. My main job in this position was to co-lead a Bible study with Jack Miller, the group advisor. It was a great learning experience for me because I had never done that sort of thing before. I got to lead a couple of the studies, and I learned a bit on how to prepare.

We studied

the Gospel of John the first semester and got through most of it. Second semester we started Ephesians. We went in depth and only got to the second chapter. It was a

good time, and in both studies we learned a lot from God's Word. As an officer, I also took part in the meetings to plan the events for HOPE. We also had someone at each officers' meeting who provided us with some teaching related to the Christian life.

My other role

was as a singer in the worship team. This group of students led in worship before the speaker. I also served as one of the leaders of the Adventure Club. As a leader in this student organization, I worked with others to plan various trips, including white-water rafting, backpacking in Michigan and Utah, tobogganing, and repelling. In these activities we encouraged having fun in God's creation. We met once a week to figure out what needed to be done for the next trip and to receive practical wilderness training.

Dr. Gleason: Brian, I know you were also involved in other excellent experiences, such as "A Week In The Word," which I hope we can write about in future articles. In just a few concluding words, tell the three top reasons you would give if a student in high school were to ask you why he or she should consider attending Ashland University.

Brian: (3) Great fellowship. Between the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), HOPE, and Adventure Club, you will meet many new friends and many strong Christians.



Brian Ronk



(2) Good teaching and teachers. The Religious Life staff is excellent. Among all of them there is a wealth of knowledge. They strongly encourage students to study the Bible,

Financial Aid

Brethren students who attend Ashland University are automatically eligible for the Brethren Award—\$2,000 per year in financial aid. Children of full-time Brethren pastors and missionaries are eligible for the Ministerial Award, which is equal to 75 percent of the cost of tuition.

to learn on their own. They show us the door; we have to open it.

(1) Opportunity. There is a need for a Christian presence on campus—for Christians who will stand up for what is right and not back down under pressure; who will stand up for God and for what He stands for.

Dr. Gleason: Thank you so much for your thoughts, Brian, and most importantly for your commitment to Christ and His work here at Ashland University. I look forward to serving alongside you in the upcoming year! *(continued next column)*

If you would like more information about Ashland University, clip out this form, fill it in, and return it to: Office of Admission, Ashland University, 401 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805-9981.

Name _____ ☐ Female ☐ Male

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Telephone (____) _____ County _____

High School _____

City of High School _____ Year of Grad. _____ GPA _____

College, if transferring _____

Intended Major _____

Athletics/Activities you wish to pursue _____

Ethnic Origin: ☐ White ☐ Black/African American ☐ Hispanic/Latino

☐ Asian ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

The Brethren Evangelist

For our readers who would like additional information on any of the organizations that Brian mentioned (HOPE, FCA, Adventure Club), or on other ministries of the Religious Life Department such as mid-week chapel services, University Church, or the AU Religion Club, you can ac-

cess the Religious Life site on the Ashland University web page (www.ashland.edu). Or you can contact me personally through my e-mail (mgleason@ashland.edu) or by regular mail (401 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805). I would be glad to hear from you. [✉]

Renewing Pastor and People

(continued from page 9)

of Berlin, Pa., commented, "This process teaches a strategic way for the pastor and his people to work together to remove the barriers to growth in their church."

Rev. Paul Sluss, pastor of the Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church, said, "This class is the most practical thing ever to come out of the seminary, and I appreciate it."

And Pastor John Allison of University Church in Ashland, Ohio, stated, "If every Brethren pastor and church would participate in this program, our denomination would be renewed."

Brethren participants also report positive results in their churches:

Rev. Bob French, pastor of the Gratis, Ohio, First Brethren Church, reports that he is a changed person and that his church has come to life, both changes a direct result of *Renewing Pastor and People*.

Rev. Ed Miller, pastor of the Fremont, Ohio, Brethren Church, said, "We have basically scrapped the old plan and now we are doing something that works."

Pastor Richard Morris reports that at the Columbus, Ohio, First Brethren Church, "Everybody is excited."

According to Rev. Ralph Gibson, pastor of the Louisville, Ohio, Brethren Bible Church, "Things are going well. Inspiration abounds and lead-

ership seems open to looking at new ideas."

And Pastor Jim Garrett found that there was so much excitement in the Lanark, Ill., First Brethren Church as a result of this seminar that it was difficult to contain.

Brethren participants also said that they would be happy to talk to anyone who wants more information about *Renewing Pastor and People*.

The next cycle of *Renewing Pastor and People* begins in September, and registrations are currently being accepted. Interested parties should contact me (Alan Schmiedt) at The Brethren Church National Office (877-289-1708), or call Cheryl Schmiedt at Ashland Theological Seminary (419-289-5909). Space is limited, so time is of the essence. [✉]

*Mr. Schmiedt, a student at Ashland Theological Seminary and part-time employee for the National Office, has worked closely with *Renewing Pastor and People*.*



Pastor Richard Morris and People (l. to r., Shepherd Verhoff, Betty and John Jordan) of the Columbus, Ohio, First Brethren Church, talk about plans for their congregation.



You are invited!

Cheyenne Wyo. — Brethren traveling to General Conference are invited to take a side trip to Cheyenne on the way. On Sunday, August 6, (the day before Conference) Dr. Jeff Kaplan, church planter for Rocky Mountain Community Church in Highlands Ranch, Colo., and the Rocky Mountain Church core team will join the Cheyenne Brethren for worship at 10:30 a.m. in Cheyenne.

Dr. Kaplan will preach from the roof of the building! After the service, Pastor G. Emery Hurd and the Cheyenne congregation will host a carry-in dinner for all who attend.

The Cheyenne Church building is located at 2600 East 12th Street in Cheyenne. For more information contact the Cheyenne Church by phone at 307-638-6411 or by e-mail at CheyenneBrethrenCh@att.net. [✚]

Easter, second anniversary big events at Cross Keys

Port Republic, Va. — Cross Keys Worship Center, known for doing things a little differently, celebrated Easter a little differently this year as well.

On Easter Sunday morning the congregation had a sunrise service only (no regular service). But what a service it was! Held in God's great out-of-doors, the service included a short drama reenacting events at Christ's tomb while appropriate scripture passages were read. The drama was put together by Barbara Ervin, who also read two poems appropriate to the occasion. The service also included times of singing and sharing of testimonies. Becky Lambert led in "Blooming the Cross"—a rough cross was covered with spring flowers, with everyone at the service adding a bloom.

Keith Mumbert played "Up From the Grave He Arose" on the trumpet. This blessed not only the Cross Keys group, but also people from a nearby church

who were also having a sunrise service. The highlight of the service was a reenactment of a resurrection appearance of Jesus, presented by Robert Wine — whose long hair and beard well-suited him for the part (see photo).

An Easter breakfast with time for fellowship followed the service.

On Sunday, May 21, Cross Keys Worship Center celebrated its second anniversary. The speaker for this occasion was Rev. Kent Bennett. Rev. Bennett played a significant role in the life of Cross Keys Pastor Pat Velanzon and his wife Kathy, for it was under his ministry at the Maurertown, Va., Brethren Church that the Velanzons were saved. He also taught



Robert Wine (center) as the resurrected Christ along with other participants in the sunrise service dramas—(l. to r.) Gail Rodeffer, Kris Estep, Mike Eye, Leon Ervin, Barbara Ervin, Karen Musselman, and Betty Mitchell.

the Velanzons the basics of the faith through a powerful study of Romans and through eight years of close association in ministry.

There was a record attendance of 87 for the service, and enough food to feed twice that many. Everyone was blessed in many ways.

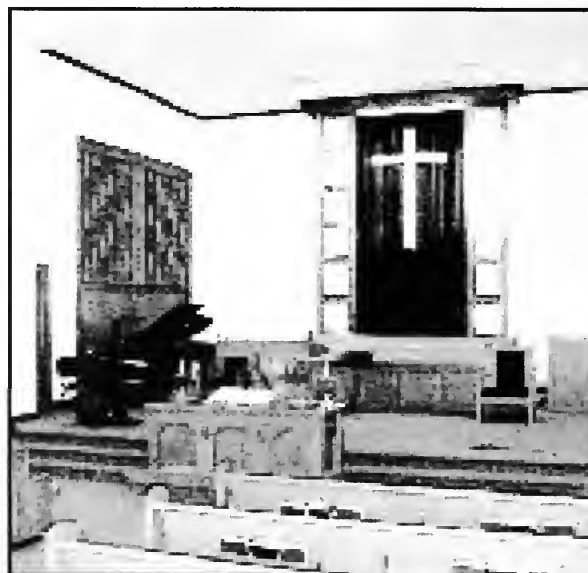
—reported by Kathy Velanzo.✚

Smithville, Ohio, Brethren Church dedicates remodeled sanctuary

Smithville, Ohio — Sunday, May 21, was a special day in the life of the Smithville Brethren Church, as on that day the congregation dedicated its remodeled sanctuary.

Improvements made to the sanctuary included new carpet, new plaster work and paint, refinishing of window frames, a new sound system, a new entrance, rearrangement of the platform furniture, and provision of disabled seating in the pew area. In addition, the sanctuary was air conditioned (as well as other parts of the church building that had not previously been air conditioned).

Called "Project 2000," the sanctuary renewal was approved October 31, 1999, and work began in early



A view of the front of the remodeled sanctuary of the Smithville Brethren Church.

February of this year. The first worship service in the renewed sanctuary was held on Easter Sunday. The cost of Project 2000 was approximately \$125,000. [✚]

In Lima, Peru: The walls came down, but they are going back up!

Lima, Peru — Construction of the new church building for Iglesia de los Hermanos in Lima, Peru, where Brethren missionaries Rev. Miguel and Sonia Antunez serve, is progressing rapidly. The old building was razed to make room for a



Above:
"Before"

At left:
"After"

Below:
The walls
going
back up.



new three-story facility. When completed, the new building will house an auditorium; a mezzanine with additional seating, sound room and storage; a fellowship and educational hall; and a pastor's apartment.

A contractor is constructing the shell of the new church building. The inside will be finished by the congregation itself and by a team (or teams) of workers from Brethren churches in the United States.

The new building will increase seating capacity from about 50 to 200. Nearly 50 people will be able to sit in the mezzanine. The old building was very cramped and cut up. The new building will permit everyone inside to view the speaker (which was not the case in the old

building). It will also provide more space for Sunday school classes, Bible studies, and leadership training classes.

Offerings from Women's Missionary Societies in the U.S. were used to purchase the property and the old building. Growth Partner offerings are making it possible for the growing church to build the new facility on the same site. When completed, the church building will be the tallest structure in the area.

— Reilly Smith



Seven Brethren receive degrees at ATS graduation

Ashland, Ohio — Seven Brethren received degrees on Saturday, May 27, when Ashland Theological Seminary held its annual commencement ceremony.

Karen M. Frado, former member of the Linwood, Md., Brethren Church and currently a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, received a Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree (*with high honors*). She serves as prayer coordinator for Park Street Church and has written several articles on prayer and the Lighthouses of Prayer movement for THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST.

Dianna L. Park, a member of the Pleasant View Brethren Church of Vandergrift, Pa., received the Master of Divinity degree. She plans to do pastoral ministry.

Anthony M. Price, a member of The Brethren Church at New Lebanon, Ohio, received the Master of Divinity degree. He serves as associate pastor of Trinity Brethren Church in North Canton, Ohio.

Timothy L. Solomon, a member of the Sarasota, Fla., First Brethren Church, received a Master of Arts degree (*with high honors*). He serves as Marketing Director for Campus Crusade for Christ and part time as associate pastor at Sarasota First Brethren Church.

Tracy L. Whiteside, a member of the Smoky Row Brethren Church of Columbus, Ohio, received a Master of Arts in Clinical Pastoral Counseling degree (*with high honors*). She serves as director of the camping program in the Ohio District and will be assisting her husband, Rev. Jeff Whiteside, in planting a new Brethren church in the Delaware, Ohio, area.

Thomas A. Smith received the Doctor of Ministry degree. Dr. Smith (*continued on next page*)



ATS graduates

(continued from previous page)

was until recently pastor of the Muncie, Ind., First Brethren Church, and in June became pastor of the Bethlehem Brethren Church of Harrisonburg, Va.

Honored by the seminary with a Doctor of Laws degree was **Thomas L. Stoffer**, a long-time member of



Dr. Dale Stoffer (behind, face not visible), professor at Ashland Seminary, places an academic hood symbolizing the honorary degree on his father, Dr. Thomas L. Stoffer.

The Brethren Church (North Georgetown, Canton Trinity, Ashland Garber), with a distinguished record of service to the Brethren at the local, district, and denominational levels.

A graduate of Ashland College and Western Reserve University Law School, Dr. Stoffer worked as an attorney with Nationwide Insurance for 36 years. He served from 1966–2000 as the Ohio District representative to the Board of Trustees of Ashland College, from 1971–2000 as chair of the Seminary Committee of the Board of Trustees, and from 1973–2000 as vice-president/vice-chairman of the Board of Trustees. He and his wife Donna (Rubert) have four children, two employed by Ashland University and one by Ashland Theological Seminary.

In addition to these Brethren Church members, two Chinese students with Brethren Church connections also received degrees—**Cheng-ju Huo** (“Newman”) from Yongchen, Henan, China (M.A. degree in Biblical and Theological Studies; and **Jin Ou** from Shanghai, China (M.A. in Christian Ministry).

Brethren in Indiana meet for worship, fellowship, and to conduct district business

Shipshewana, Ind. — A total of 119 delegates to the Indiana District Conference, held June 1–3, enjoyed the beauty and hospitality of the Brethren Retreat Center as they worshiped, fellowshiped, and conducted the business of the district.

The conference opened Thursday evening with a spirited time of praise and worship led by the worship team from Eagle’s Nest Christian Fellowship. Then Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, spoke, challenging all to a deeper, stronger commitment to Christ and The Brethren Church. A time of fellowship followed before the Brethren turned in for a night’s rest.

Friday morning began with a time of worship and a challenge from Moderator-Elect John Garrett to “Walk as Jesus Walked.” The conference was challenged to take steps of courage and faith as ministry gets accomplished. A brief business session followed. Then the conference broke into auxiliary sessions.

The afternoon business was highlighted by reports from denominational and Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary representatives. The conference thanks Dave Cooksey, Lee Solomon, Reilly Smith, Dan Lawson, and Buzz Sandberg for sharing with them. The ballot was established for elections and then more auxiliary sessions followed.

The evening opened with a presentation by the “Brighton the Corner” puppet ministry from the Brighton

Chapel Brethren Church. This group of 4th–7th-graders did several short plays, and director Johna Dilow added a ventriloquism act.

“Praise Giving” from the Dutch-town Church led a time of worship, followed by a message by Dr. Charles Munson. Using the ceiling of the Sistene Chapel to illustrate, Dr. Munson spoke about yielding to God. He challenged the Brethren to reach out, submit, and touch Him.

Saturday morning began with a time of worship led by a worship team from Nappanee First Brethren Church. A strong sense of the Holy Spirit’s presence filled the room as the final business session began.

This session included reports by chairs of the district ministries and a progress report on the closing of the Carmel Church and sale of the property. A presentation was also made on the status of hiring a full-time district pastor. Election results were given: Rev. Chris Moellering—moderator-elect; Bev Baker—secretary. Last year’s moderator-elect, John Garrett, becomes moderator.

Reilly Smith installed the new officers, encouraging the conference to pray for them and to support their work. Moderator Dennis Sigle, who is moving with his family to Kansas, said his final goodbyes to the Indiana District. He then announced that next year’s conference would be held June 14–16 at the Brethren Retreat Center, and he closed the conference with prayer.

— reported by Rev. Billy Hesketh,
Indiana District Secretary

Easter in Hungary

Brethren Chaplain (Major) David Graetz (right) led an Easter sunrise service at an Army base in Taszar, Hungary, this past Easter. Chaplain Graetz is on active duty in Hungary as National Support Element Chaplain for U.S. peacekeeping forces in the Balkans. Chaplain Graetz was voluntarily activated for this duty in January 2000 and will be on active duty with “Operation Joint Forge” until October. [✚]

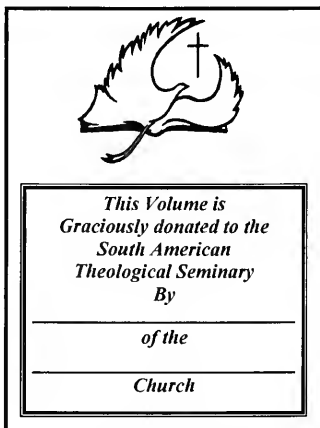


Cheyenne Church heading effort to get books for South American Seminary

Cheyenne, Wyo. — The Cheyenne Brethren Church, in cooperation with the Missionary Ministries Council of The Brethren Church, is providing your congregation an easy, unique, and exciting way to promote missions.

The South American Theological Seminary—a joint project of The Brethren Church in the U.S.A., Ashland Theological Seminary, and The Brethren Church in Argentina—is seeking to build its library so that it can receive accreditation for the education of Brethren pastors, educators, and missionaries throughout Latin America. (See pages 6 and 7 for more about this seminary.)

The Cheyenne Brethren Church instituted the idea of offering individuals and families the opportunity



A sample bookplate

to share in this work by purchasing dedicatory bookplates for the library. Each bookplate equals a gift of \$20.00, which will purchase one volume for the library. The bookplates will be affixed to the books in the library, a reminder of the love and support the U.S. congregations have for their South American Brethren.

This idea was so successful in Cheyenne that the congregation asked permission to coordinate this fundraising effort throughout the denomination. Local churches have already received promotional packages, but even if you missed the July 15 deadline, we are still permitting individuals to contribute through August. Simply send your contribution, your church name, and the name you

James Frado to serve The Brethren Church as Director of Stewardship and Development

Ashland, Ohio — Dr. Emanuel Sandberg has announced the appointment of James Frado to the full-time position of Director of Stewardship and Development for The Brethren Church.

Mr. Frado is not new to this position, having served as Manager of Stewardship and Planned Giving on a part-time basis for the past three years. Upon the recommendation of the Congregational Ministries Council and with the approval of the Executive Board, this has now been expanded to the full-time position of Director of Stewardship and Development.



Jim Frado

Prior to his denominational appointment, Jim was employed by a local professional services firm, where he advised clients in financial planning, investments, insurance, and marketing. Jim earned designations as a Chartered Financial Consultant and Chartered Life Underwriter from The American College in Bryn Mawr, Pa., and is a registered General Securities Principal with the National Association of Securities Dealers. His background also includes development of multiple financial services entities for major banking institutions in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia.

In 1996 Jim and his family moved from Linwood, Md., where they were members of the Linwood Brethren Church, to Ashland, where both he and his wife Karen began studies at Ashland Theological Seminary. Jim expects to receive a Master of Divinity degree next year, and Karen received



would like put on the bookplate to:
SAS Bookplates

Cheyenne Brethren Church
2600 East 12th St.
Cheyenne, WY 82001-5602

The Cheyenne Brethren Church will be handling all administration, promotion, and production of this project, so all donations, questions, or material requests should be directed to the Cheyenne Brethren Church, not The Brethren Church National Office. We will be presenting the funds and bookplates donated to date at the Estes 2000 General Conference, but donations will be accepted through August 31, 2000.

If each Brethren family would purchase just one volume for the library, we would completely supply the volumes the South American Theological Seminary still needs for accreditation. Please seriously consider joining this national effort to further God's Kingdom.

If you have questions about this fundraising effort, please contact Pastor Emery Hurd at the Cheyenne Brethren Church (by e-mail at CheyenneBrethrenCh@att.net, by phone at 307-638-6411. [✉])

a Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree this spring. As members of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, Jim and Karen participate in the church's newest outreach service, The Crossing, and teach a Sunday school class for fifth- and sixth-grade youth. Karen also serves the church as prayer coordinator.

For the past two years Jim has served in several worship capacities—with Dr. Terry Wardle and Dr. Richard Parrott in *Renewing Pastor and People*, and as worship coordinator for General Conference. Jim also owns Small Voice Studios, a digital recording facility focusing on the development and encouragement of gifted Christian artists.

Jim and Karen have three children, a daughter Allison (13), and sons James (11) and Michael (9). [✉]



New Lebanon Brethren enjoy special Sundays

New Lebanon, Ohio — A variety of special events have taken place on recent Sundays at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon.

On Mother's Day, the congregation honored Jane Metzger as Woman of the Year. Mrs. Metzger has been an active member of the church for many years, including many years on the Ministry of Deacons with her late husband Howard. As a special surprise, her grandson, Chris Wolfe, played a cello solo at the service.

So as not to show partiality, the local W.M.S. began this year selecting a Man of the Year, honored on Father's Day. This year's honoree was Jim Eck, who served the local church for many years as treasurer and on the Ministry of Deacons, and who also served the denomination as a member of the Missionary Board of the Brethren Church. Mr. Eck, who passed away in April, was honored posthumously, with the award being presented to his wife Wanda.

Moldova, a little-known country that used to be part of the Soviet

Union, became a little better known at New Lebanon on Sunday, May 28, when David and Sherri Rowser spoke at the church. David, Sherri, and their children serve as missionaries to Moldova. David, who grew up in New Lebanon, is the son of former pastor and wife, Rev. Don and Charlene Rowser, who attended the service. A carry-in meal after the service provided time for fellowship with the Rowser family.

On the following Sunday, June 4, the youth took charge of the worship service, providing special music and presenting a skit that captured everyone's attention. The young children played the bells and sang. Youth Director Kyle Wardlaw presented the morning message.

Pop and a hot dog both for a quarter! That's what the Outreach Committee of the church offered people who attended Stagecoach Days, June 9-11, in the New Lebanon community. People were surprised—and pleased—at the price. The church used this as an act of kindness to the New Lebanon community. And since everything was donated by members or groups within the church, the committee made nearly \$200, which went to a benefit set up to help cover medical expenses for two community young people suffering with brain cancer.

In addition to these special



Jane Metzger (l.), New Lebanon's Woman of the Year 2000, with Pauline Winfield, last year's honoree.

events, The Brethren Church at New Lebanon continues to serve as the host church for the community food pantry. And the church provides a free meal one Saturday a month to anyone who requests it.

Rev. Bill Walk, pastor of the church, asks that Brethren "Continue to pray for us as we seek new and different opportunities to get God's Word around." [✝]

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New Pastor

The First Brethren Church of West Alexandria, Ohio, has a new pastor. Rev. Frank Prottinger (*at left in photo*) began serving the congregation July 1. From a Grace Brethren background, Pastor Prottinger comes to West Alexandria from Union City, Ind. He and his wife Sharon (*at right in photo*) have three children, all married, and nine grandchildren.

— report and photo by
Audrey Gilbert



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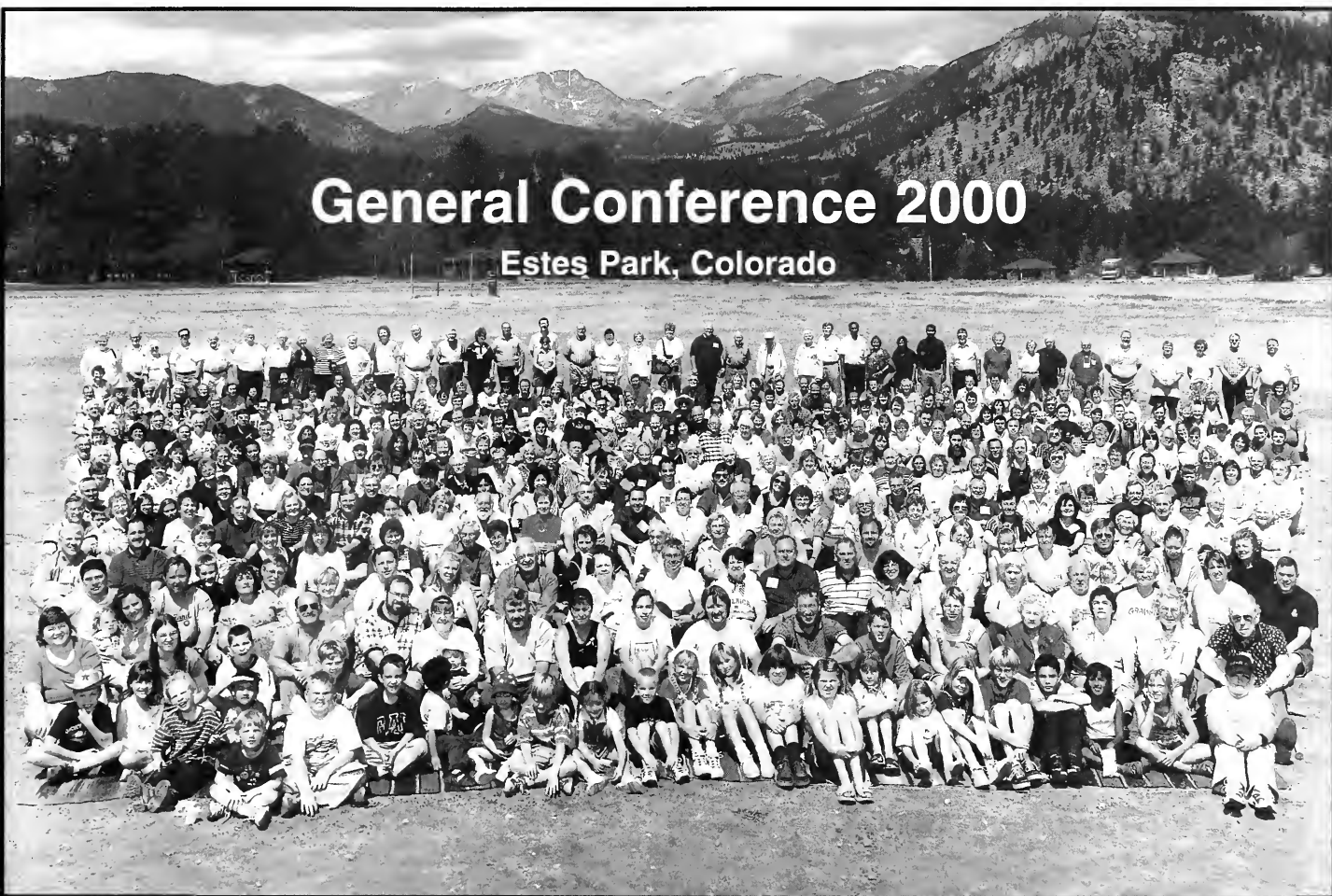


Vol. 122, No. 8

A newsletter for Brethren people

September 2000

General Conference 2000 Estes Park, Colorado



RENEW OUR SPIRIT was the theme of General Conference 2000, held last month at Estes Park, Colorado. The location, in the midst of majestic mountains (*see above*), was conducive to renewal. As Leroy Solomon, our new Conference moderator, wrote, "The scenery of Estes Park caused the verse from Psalm 8 to ring in my mind and heart all week: 'O LORD, our LORD, the majesty of your name fills the earth' (NL). And yet I was reminded that the majesty of the scenery could not be compared to God's majesty, the Creator of all this scenery."

Add to this magnificent scenery the wonderful times of worship, the blessed fellowship of the Brethren, periods of prayer, and powerful messages from God's Word, and all the elements for renewal were present. And renewal did happen, as God's Spirit moved among the Brethren.

The following pages give a report of the Conference and of the BYIC Convention that was held concurrently. (And the *Women's Outlook Newsletter* in the center of this issue tells about the W.M.S. Conference.) Reading about Conference isn't the same as being there, that's for cer-

tain. But some of the blessing and inspiration can be received in this way. And for those who want to go deeper, audio cassettes of the messages are available (*see page 3*).

It is my prayer that the pages that follow will be a means by which God continues to *Renew Our Spirit* in The Brethren Church.

— Richard Winfield, editor

Photo above: The All-Conference Group Picture. Full-color, 10 x 16 inch copies are available for \$15.00 from Photos by Dill, 970-586-8736. Reorder #2118. (Copyright © Photos by Dill, Inc.; used by permission.)

Monday: Opening Celebration

Going beyond contentment

Reported by Rich Rader

WHETHER on a plane or in a pew, most people are not looking for excitement. They just want to be content. The Brethren denomination has a choice to make: Will we be satisfied to be content where we are as a church, or do we want more? This was the question put before us by Dr. Dan Lawson, Director of Congregational Ministries for our denomination, as he shared God's Word in the opening celebration of the 112th General Conference of The Brethren Church.

Situated at an elevation above 8000 feet, we found ourselves surrounded by the majesty of our living Lord as we gazed upon the breathtaking Rocky Mountains and the beautiful, wide-open Colorado skies. We sensed the sweetness of God's Holy Spirit, ready to meet us for a week of refreshment and renewal.

Rev. G. Emery Hurd, pastor of the nearby Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church, welcomed all who had gathered in the Walter G. Ruesch Auditorium to kick off this much-anticipated Conference. He reminded those assembled that the success of this event was not about planning, but about prayer; not about proclamation, but about praise; not about our wills, but about worship.

Dr. John Shultz, General Conference moderator, reminded us of the theme for the week, and with our minds, hearts, and spirits focused



Dr. Dan Lawson

the Lord through music. By means of a concert of prayer, brothers and sisters from around the world celebrated a year filled with the many blessings of God. We eagerly listened to the exciting vision for future ministry God is giving to individuals around the denomination.

Our hearts rejoiced as we heard the testimonies of Rev. Bob French and Rev. Paul Sluss, who shared how the vitality of their local churches had been enhanced through "Renewing Pastor and People." The Conference responded by sharing a \$4,525 offering for scholarships for the continuation of this program.

Dr. Lawson brought the evening message from Hebrews 12:1-3. He opened by talking about that long-loved game, hide-and-seek. "Have you been hiding from God?" he asked. It's time to allow God to find us, so that we can run home *together*.

Reminding us that the previous chapter (ch. 11) of Hebrews contains what many people consider to be the "great hall of faith" of the Bible—a list of the Old Testament's heroes of faith—Dr. Lawson encouraged us to ask ourselves a two-part question, "Whom do I want to be like?" and "Am I living like the people I want to be like?" If we are going to be like our faith heroes in Hebrews 11, then there are three things that Hebrews 12:1-3 tells us we must do, he said.

The first thing we must do is "throw off everything that hinders." We must rid ourselves of all the excess baggage that weighs us down. Dr. Lawson pointed out that the word used here is actually a physical fitness term. "You can't win the race when you are spiritually flabby." We must also "throw off . . . the sin that so easily entangles." A runner who has his



The Spirit 2000 Praise Team provided spirited and Spirit-filled leadership for times of worship on Monday night and for numerous other sessions throughout the week. Team members included (l. to r.) Mike Lawrentz, Reo Oblisk, Wes Porter, Neil Ebert, Scott Ashley, Doug Cooper (foreground), Jim Frado, and Scott Ailes, as well as (not shown) drummer Sean Ebert, sound technician Gabe Plank, and visuals technician Bruce Ronk.

on Jesus, we entered into a week of prayer, praise, and worship, asking God to "Renew Our Spirit."

The Spirit 2000 Praise Team ignited our worship as we lifted our voices, our hands, and our hearts to

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feet tangled up in a mess of rope or chains will never have a chance to finish the race, much less an opportunity to win. We cannot win the race with our feet tangled up in sin.

The second thing we must do is "run." The Christian faith is not a passive activity. We must run! Our faith must be a living, active, daily part of our lives. Dr. Lawson put it plainly: "If you are not active and growing, you are passive and dying." Nor are we called to run haphazardly, but

rather "with perseverance the race marked out for us." In other words, we are called to stay on course.

How do we do that? We stay on course by "fixing our eyes on Jesus." Who is He? He's "the author and perfecter of our faith." Why did Jesus suffer and die for us on the



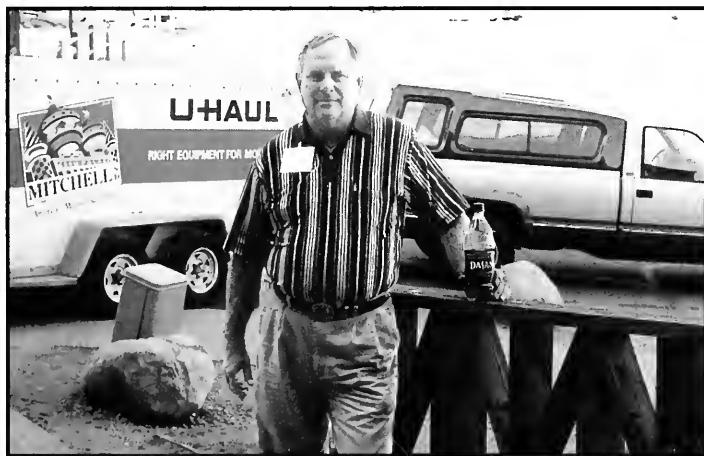
An eruption of praise to God filled the Walter G. Ruesch Auditorium with joyful sound, as the opening celebration of the 112th General Conference of The Brethren Church got underway.

cross? He did so "for the joy set before him"—for the joy of seeing your soul and my soul in heaven. "When Jesus hung on the cross, He had you on His mind," Dr. Lawson said.

Whether on a plane or in a pew, most are satisfied just to be content. Dr. Lawson concluded his challenge

of our life in Christ by saying, "What about you? Are you content, or do you want more?" The question is yours. [†]

Mr. Rader serves as Pastor of Worship and Evangelism at Living Waters Community Church, Mansfield, Ohio.



Many behind-the-scenes servants play an important role in the success of any Conference. One person who played a crucial role in this year's event was Alan Schmiedt (above), who, with help from others, loaded sound equipment, boxes of Conference folders and other supplies, National Office equipment, displays, supplies and equipment for the Youth Convention, and even Charlie Munson's scooter, in his pickup and a U-Haul trailer. Then, accompanied by his wife Cheryl, Alan drove 1,400 miles to deliver everything to Estes Park. And after Conference, he brought it all (except what was distributed during the week) back to Ashland.

Another servant who has worked behind the scenes at Conference for a number of years is Rev. Gene Oburn (above right), pastor of the Lorce Brethren Church, who makes tapes of the Conference speakers and workshop leaders and duplicates them for those who wish to purchase



copies. Gene was on the job again this year and made tapes of Dan Lawson's message; Sally Morgenthaler's evening message and her workshop; Ken Blue's evening message and his two workshops; H.B. London's evening message and his workshop; Terry Wardle's two workshops; and a workshop by Bill Wright.

Tapes are still available and may be purchased for \$5 each, 4 tapes for \$16, or all 11 tapes for \$45 (plus \$2 for shipping on any order). Send your order (with check payable to The Brethren Church) to The Brethren Church, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805. Indicate the speaker(s) you want, evening message or workshop or both. See articles in this issue for titles and more information.

Tuesday's Youth-Adult Session

"Can We Read Billboards?"

Reported by Norma Waters

THE COMBINED YOUTH-ADULT worship service on Tuesday evening of General Conference was held in the appropriately named Longhouse, the only building large enough to accommodate the approximately 1,100 youth and adults attending the BYIC Convention and the adult Conference. After prelude music by Aaron Wardle from Ashland, Ohio, National Youth Leader Jaime Gillespie moderated a time of prayer requests and praises. During this time several youth gave touching testimonies of how God was at work in and through their lives.

Several other youth delegates presented a short drama called "Rotten Fruit." This was followed by a time of group singing, led by the combined youth and adult worship teams. The offering emphasis for the evening—a new ministry called

the Brethren Service Corps—was explained by Dr. Buzz Sandberg, Executive Director for The Brethren Church. An offering of \$6,939.72 was received.

The speaker for the evening was Sally Morgenthauer, worship coordinator for her local church, worship specialist



In addition to her voice and lively gestures, Sally Morgenthauer used recorded music, video clips, and other projected visuals during her Tuesday evening message to model a multi-sensory approach to worship.



with Denver Seminary, public speaker, seminar leader, and author. The title of Ms. Morgenthauer's message was "Can We Read Billboards?" Her objectives were (1) to

impress upon us the characteristics of the postmodern generation (our young people), and (2) to help us decide whether we are communicating our faith to them effectively in our churches and homes.

The first thing Ms. Morgenthauer emphasized was the immense amount of information surrounding us today. She said that it is expected that there will be as much new knowledge obtained in the next three decades as there has been in the past three centuries. Furthermore, technology makes all of this information readily accessible to each individual.

Ms. Morgenthauer expounded on six characteristics of the youth of the postmodern generation: they are extremely technologically savvy; they are able to take in several things at once; they are very interested in the mystical and the supernatural; they are not accepting of moral or spiritual absolutes, they are highly cynical and skeptical of authority; but they are still very desirous of emotional attachment and lasting relationships.

She said that the first aspect is the one churches need to work on the most—using more technology to communicate better. (Ms. Morgenthauer used computerized audio visuals throughout her talk to illustrate this point.) The sixth aspect is where Ms. Morgenthauer says the church has its best means of influencing our youth. She said that today's youth do not feel their identity is in their knowledge, achievements, or wealth, but in friendships. We must show that we care about them and that we will commit



To accommodate the crowd of more than 1,000, Tuesday evening's combined youth-adult worship service was held in the Longhouse, where the BYIC Convention was having its sessions. During the service one of the youth said approvingly that this is the first time the adults have come to the "youth house" for a combined service. In the past, the youth have always gone to where the adults were meeting.

to relationships with them because of our love through Christ.

Ms. Morgenthaler concluded with three points for our churches to remember. Youth of the postmodern age believe that (1) there is a God and the church is not it, (2) people are all a mess, and (3) we need each other to get through. In response, churches must find ways to (1) show them the true God and our relationship with Him, (2) exhibit brokenness and the way to real life through Christ, and (3) prove that we are a community of caring people. She closed with 1 Peter 2:9 — “But you are not like that [the world], for you are a chosen people . . . This is so you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light” (*New Living Bible*). [†]

Mrs. Waters, a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, Ohio, is an employee of The Carpenter's Shop, the Brethren bookstore in Ashland.

Touchstones of Worship for Postmoderns

In addition to her Tuesday evening message, Sally Morgenthaler led a workshop Wednesday morning entitled “Touchstones of Worship for Postmoderns.” Throughout the workshop she emphasized the centrality of relationships in reaching younger generations, but pointing out equally that worship is about bringing people into an encounter and relationship with God.

Morgenthaler noted that worship services today should be multi-sensory to effectively reach all people. As a reaction to Catholicism, Protestant Christianity became “a spirituality that is imprisoned in print” and devoid of much in the realm of the five senses. She reminded participants that “the Word is first and foremost a person, Jesus Christ.”

She discussed several elements missing in many worship services and settings, including visuals and graphic images, drama, story, and atmosphere. “If we don’t give people something to look at,” she said, “we are depriving them of something very important in their encounter with God. And I’m not talking just about our young people!”

In spite of her emphasis on being aware of postmodern perspectives, she was careful to say that she does not advocate a form of “postmodern worship” where every “story” has equal validity. “Christianity does have a grand story, and it is summarized in John 3:16,” she said. But that grand story must

connect with the stories of individual people in a way that is transforming.

Morgenthaler also stressed that, if worship is to involve more of the senses, it will require a planning team working well in advance. This team should consist of the pastor and the lead persons in the congregation having special skills in particular art forms. For example, she mentioned that any church with as few as 30 persons has at least one photographer. Persons with a passion for the arts often feel neglected and under-utilized in our predominantly verbal church culture. “The key,” she said to pastors, “is that you are not doing it alone.”

She closed by saying that “the age of ‘one size fits all’ is gone. There is no other church in the universe like yours.” She encouraged leaders not to try to mimic another church nor to try to address all art forms or styles, particularly at the beginning. Instead, she said, congregations should begin with the skills represented in the congregation, trusting God to guide them in creating worship services to reach a growing variety of persons.

— reported by Ronald W. Waters

Rev. Waters is Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Ashland Theological Seminary and Consultant for Evangelism/Church Growth for The Brethren Church.

The Flame of Love: the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in Today's Church

A workshop by Terry Wardle

“The purpose of this workshop is not to provide a recipe which you can take home and cook up in your local church. It is about a meal from God for you today,” said Dr. Terry Wardle, Associate Professor of Church Growth at Ashland Theological Seminary, as he began his workshop on “The Flame of Love: the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in Today's Church.” It's not primarily about gaining more information, but about our transformation.

Our spiritual transformation journey has three facets: (1) the Holy Spirit is drawing us into the Father's embrace; (2) the Holy Spirit desires to transform us on a moment by moment basis into the image of Jesus Christ; (3) the Holy Spirit brings healing to our lives so that we can minister as “wounded healers.” These three processes are simultaneous, not sequential. The Holy Spirit works them out as we are in relationship with the Lord and with other believers—in the “community” of faith.

Referring to 1 Corinthians 2:1–5, Dr. Wardle presented four items regarding the Holy Spirit: (1) It's not about talk. “I did not come with eloquence,” Paul wrote. (2) It's all about Christ and Him crucified. (3) It's about vulnerability on the part of the messenger. Paul wrote, “I came in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.” And (4) it's about the power of the Holy Spirit; “a demonstration of the Spirit's power,” are Paul's words (cf. 1 Thess. 1:5).

In today's world people are asking “Which god is God?” The ultimate answer to this question doesn't come from textbooks and intellectual arguments. It comes from the power of God working in people's lives so that they are changed—transformed. But at the very time when

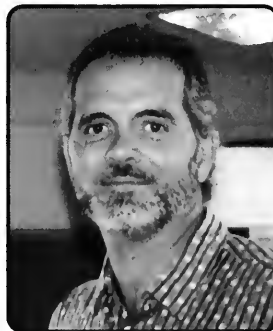
demonstrations of God's power through the Holy Spirit would answer the question, much of the church continues to marginalize the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Why is this?

Dr. Wardle presented five common concerns that many in the church have regarding openness to “demonstrations of the Spirit's power.” First, a concern that

people will set aside God's Word and be governed instead only by experiences. Solution: open God's Word more than ever before. Second, a concern that people will become preoccupied only with the “manifestations.” Solution: focus on Jesus Himself as never before. Third, a concern that excessive emotionalism will result. The solution: Not to squelch emotions but to experience healthy emotions through spiritual

and emotional healing. Observation: How can we really be in the presence of Christ and not experience emotion?

Fourth, a concern that church splits
(continued on page 7)



Dr. Terry Wardle

Wednesday: An Evening of Grace and Blessing

Reported by Tim Garner

WORSHIP reached one of its wonderful peaks during the Wednesday evening session of General Conference, as Brethren from Argentina set the mood for the international mission's focus of the evening. The 12-member praise team from Colón, Argentina, led by Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez, new parents and directors of the South American Theological Seminary, humbly and beautifully guided us cross-culturally into the presence of the Spirit of Christ. Singing in English and Spanish the gathered body was invited to "stand up and give Jesus the praise" as we "celebrated the resurrection of the Lord." ¡Vamos a celebrar! ¡Resucitó el Señor!

Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries, guided a concert of prayer for those serving as international missionaries. Dr. Fred Finks described the purpose of the special emphasis offering for the evening: \$36,000 to complete the purchase and remodeling of a facility to house the South American Theological Seminary (SATS). With the added challenge of a \$20,000 matching gift

and the guidance of the Spirit of God, the offering was received. After the offering was counted, Dr. Finks returned to the platform and took off his shoes, calling this a "Moses moment." He announced that—not including the \$20,000 matching gift—\$33,000 had been given or pledged that evening for the SATS building. To add to the thrill, it was announced that, through combined efforts of the Laymen's Organization, Missionary Ministries, and the bookplate project of the Cheyenne Brethren Church, \$26,000 had been raised to purchase books for the SATS library. What a celebration of giving!

The grace of God illustrated by the inspiration of music and the generosity of the offerings was complimented by the insights of the evening's speaker, Dr. Ken Blue, pastor of Foothills Church of San Diego, Calif. Dr. Blue put a fresh face on the grace of God. Using numer-

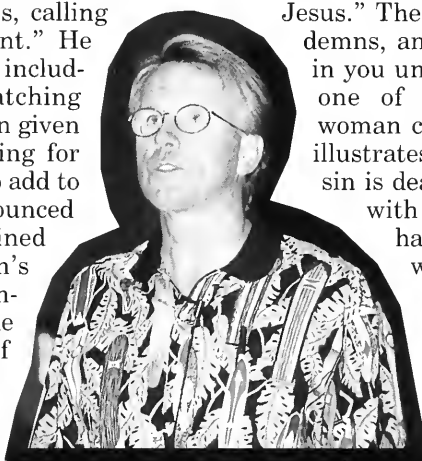
ous first-century cultural insights throughout the address, he illustrated and defined grace through Jesus' encounters with three "bad women." Blue noted that he had arrived at the three topics after listening to the Brethren at meals and during the services he had attended to that point in the week. He felt we needed to hear about God's grace in the following three areas.

First, "By God's grace, who does Jesus accept?" Blue stated that in John 8 the "agents of the law were there to accuse the lady and Jesus." The law accuses, condemns, and has no interest in you until you transgress one of the rules." The woman caught in adultery illustrates that the wages of sin is death. Her accusers, with stones in hand, had a just cause by which to kill her. The Pharisees' mindset was "Keep the rules and be rewarded. Break the rules and get punished." Do we, like the

Pharisees, have a law mentality? Do we get legalistic about issues? Do we accuse people of lawbreaking when extending a hand of grace would be more grace-full? Blue stated, "When Jesus is around, people are not hurt by the law. Jesus says to the woman, 'Don't ever even think that I will accuse you.'" One's performance

is irrelevant to Jesus' acceptance. His love keeps no record of wrongs.

Accusation had no part of Jesus' ministry. Is it a part of the church's ministry? Blue concluded his first point by saying, "Whoever has the power to manipulate you and humiliate you, has the power to abuse you." The means of this



Dr. Ken Blue



The Praise Team from Colón, Argentina, led the Conference in excitement-filled praise to God in both English and Spanish. Team members are (l. to r.) Marcela Rivero, Gustavo Estabillo, Sebastian Valli, Monica Santiago, Romina de DeCarlo, Mauricio Movili, Verónica Ulla de Petracca, Liliana de Stradella, Marcelo Deacon, Mariela de Rodriguez, Alvaro DeCarlo (behind), and Eduardo Rodriguez (in front).

abuse is often accusation. Blue's observations of the Brethren tell him that we need to work on accepting one another in love and grace.

The second question Blue addressed was, "By God's grace, whose worship does He accept?" Luke 7:36-50 records the story of a second "bad woman" who receives grace. She is an uninvited guest to Simon the Pharisee's home. She is a prostitute. Her let-down hair, telling others she's open for business, has a different use that evening. Breaking the expensive alabaster vial of perfume, the profit from her trade, she offers it, her tears, her kisses, her very self to Jesus. Of this shocking behavior, Jesus in essence says, "I like it." She gave what she had. Jesus wants and

graciously accepts our worship when we give what we have.

The debate over worship styles rages across our country. Blue observed simply that if people are giving God all they are and all they have, God accepts this as worship. And we would do well to do likewise.

The third question of the evening was, "By the grace of God, who does He use in ministry?" The third "bad woman" is found in John 4. This account illustrates how Jesus invites this ostracized, five-time-married-living-with-a-sixth-man Samaritan woman into relationship with Himself. In this story Jesus again declares, "People are more important than religion" (religion defined as rule-keeping that kills, excludes,

judges). Jesus knew her "deepest reality," her sin-marred story. Yet He continued to relate to her. This acceptance reaches its climax as Jesus entrusts to her his deepest reality: I am the Messiah. She leaves her experience with Jesus as the first missionary to non-Jewish people. So, who does Jesus use in ministry? He uses anyone who has had an encounter with Him.

God's grace is unmerited favor that has the power to change women and men. When people are accepted as they are through the power of grace, they will become Christ to others. In putting a fresh face on grace, actually three fresh faces, Blue challenged the church to broaden her understanding of grace by seeing each person as more important than religion. [✠]

Rev. Garner is pastor of the First Brethren Church of Elkhart, Ind.

Workshops by Ken Blue

In addition to his Wednesday evening message, Ken Blue led two workshops—"Healing Spiritual Abuse" on Wednesday morning and "The Power of Grace" on Thursday morning.

Healing Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is the misuse of spiritual power, Blue said in his first workshop. It can be a pastor using and abusing the parishioners, or it can be a power group in the congregation abusing the pastor and/or others in the church. Guilt manipulation is a common form of spiritual abuse.

Spiritual abuse is a really big deal in the Bible, Blue said. It is the only social issue that Jesus ever took up a platform against. And yet the church has had little to say about it. Perhaps the reason for this is that the spiritual abusers whom Jesus spoke against crucified Him.

Blue used Matthew 23—the condemnation of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees—to illustrate Jesus' teaching on spiritual abuse. Spiritual abusers do not practice what they preach (v. 3); they tie heavy burdens on others but are unwilling to lift a finger to move them (v. 4); they seek to be honored (vv. 5-7); they major on minors (vv. 23-24); they are hypocrites (v. 25).

The ministry of Jesus brings joy and relief, not burden, Blue said. Grace is the cure for spiritual abuse—both for the abused and the abuser. Spiritual abusers seek to exercise authority over others. But real authority comes by loving. "Do you want to be great in the kingdom?" Blue asked. "Then find people to love and serve."

The Power of Grace

Dr. Blue used the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 to illustrate "The Power of Grace." "The father [in the parable] is a wonderful picture of God's grace and fatherly affection," he said. This grace is extended to both sons in the parable, to the younger son who lived like the scum of the earth, and to the older son who stayed home and worked in the fields.

Both sons had a legal mentality—they thought "sonship" had to be earned. The difference between the two was that the younger son knew that he had not earned it ("I am no longer worthy to be called your son" [v. 21]), while the older son thought that he had ("All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders" [v. 29]). The father wanted a relationship with both of them. All they had to do was say "yes." Salvation is a gift. We activate that salvation by saying "yes" to Jesus.

"The Power of Grace" (the extent to which God has gone to extend His grace) is well-illustrated in the parable. The father in the parable watched intently for the son (how else did he see him "while he was still a long way off"?); he was filled with compassion for the son (a deep visceral affection); he ran to the son (a very undignified thing for an older gentleman to do); he threw his arms around the son and kissed him (not only a show of affection but a means of protecting him from villagers who might have killed this "scum of the earth").

Furthermore, the father ordered his servant to put the best robe (his own robe) on the boy, to put a ring (his ring) on the boy's finger, to put sandals on his

(continued on page 9)

The Flame of Love

(continued from page 5)

will be the result. Splits come for two primary reasons: (1) pastors have not been taught how to shepherd people during renewal; (2) some sheep refuse to follow the shepherd. Solution: Let pastor and people move into renewal together. Fifth, a concern that renewal will become "hero" dominated. Solution: let all of the people—all of the "body"—be involved in ministry that is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Wardle gave four ways to open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, the flame of love: (1) **Repent**—repent of the spirit of control that we have that puts the Holy Spirit in a box. (2) **Reflect**—engage in serious reflection that approaches the Bible transformationally. (3) **Request**—The Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13), so ask. (4) **Receive**—Position oneself to receive the Holy Spirit.

The workshop concluded with a time of ministry to people who desired prayer for themselves and their local churches.

This brief capsule of the workshop presents information. For a much fuller effect, purchase a tape of the workshop (see page 3). Listen to it yourself. Listen to it with a group of people. Pray together. Receive together. The Lord is doing a new thing as He draws us to the Father's embrace through the Holy Spirit.

—reported by Arden E. Gilmer

Dr. Gilmer is senior pastor of Park Street Brethren Church, Ashland, Ohio.

Thursday: H.B. London asks, “Is anybody getting saved?”

Reported by David L. Stone

DR. H.B. LONDON preached a very challenging sermon on Thursday evening of Conference. Dr. London, Vice-President of Ministry Outreach/Pastoral Ministries for Focus on the Family, spoke on “Enjoying the Journey.” He mentioned his great burden for a church full of apathy and self-congratulation and called for us to adopt a “sense of passion and urgency.”

Dr. London noted that on average about 10.7 churches are closed and 3.5 churches are opened per day in the United States. Every day 3,500 people leave the church and never come back, primarily because they believe the church is not relevant to their lives. London called the Breth-

ren to carry on as witnesses in spite of these statistics. He presented the following principles for doing so from 1 Thessalonians 5.

Respect your pastor

Dr. London identified a tendency in the church to “touch God’s anointed” in a way that does irreparable damage not only to the pastor but also to the cause of Christ. Most pastors sincerely love their people, want to please God, and want to see God work in some special way. So it is disconcerting that about a third of all pastors have been fired at least once.

The average tenure of pastors in the United States is three and one-half years. But unless a pastor serves a church for five to seven years, he never establishes the credibility in the church and the community to be an “influencer” there. He is just a hired hand who serves a while and moves on. God calls pastors to provide leadership to the church, but they are not allowed to fulfill that role.

Dr. London listed four ways to treat our pastors better:

1. Pray for your pastor. Put a picture of him and his family on your refrigerator and pray for them every time you visit it.

2. Let him dream. Don’t use the stupidest phrases in the world, such as: “We’ve never done it before”; “It won’t work here”; “The other church down the street tried it”; and “It costs too much.” With passion Dr. London said, “Don’t you know God is trying to do a new thing? . . . Let’s not quench the Spirit!”

3. Talk to your pastor. Don’t talk through him. Don’t talk around

him. Don’t talk about him. Don’t like the music? Talk to him. Preaching too long? Talk to him. The worst thing in the world is for a pastor to be doing his very best and behind the scenes people are nit-picking and negative.

4. Don’t be part of a pocket of contention. Most pastors who leave a church due to conflict do so because of seven or fewer people. We should support our pastor, not conspire against him.

Make people holy, not just happy

Most people in the church today act like consumers. We think that whatever we believe should make us happy and comfortable. Dr. London warned that if we use our influence in the church to insist on our own way to the detriment of the gospel, God will hold us accountable. The church is not about making us feel comfortable or catering to our preferences. We should not insist on our favorite type of music or preaching style. What matters is furthering the kingdom, the glory of God.

Dr. London described his concept of revival. It is not emotion and crowds at the altar. Instead, it is characterized by those who have gone to church for years praying the prayer of the psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; . . . See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23, 24; *NIV*). Revival by this definition is when church people are willing to seek God’s will and to change in whatever way He commands. And Dr. London sees a great need for change in the church. “If the horse you’re riding is dead, for God’s sake, dismount,” he said.

Be more concerned about repentance than recruitment

Dr. London maintained that the church-growth movement died seven years ago. There are ten percent fewer people in church today

About the Service

The ministry of Ashland Theological Seminary (ATS) was highlighted during the Thursday evening service. The prelude for the service was a video presentation of a segment of the seminary choir’s Christmas concert. During the Concert of Prayer, led by ATS professor Dale Stoffer, prayers were offered for the seminary’s people (administration, faculty, students) and its ministry. Later in the service ATS President Dr. Fred Finks shared some of the exciting things happening at the seminary.

Music for the service was led by the Spirit 2000 Praise Team (*see page 2*). The music was a wonderful blend of hymns and songs that lent a meditative atmosphere to the service.

Dr. Lee Solomon spotlighted the offering, which was designated to provide funds to recruit and help train ten new church-planters for The Brethren Church. He called the current church-planters to the front of the auditorium and asked two of them, Rev. Jim Thomas and Rev. Jim Miller, to share how a life has been changed by the ministry of each of their new congregations. An offering of \$6,142.75 was received toward the goal of \$10,000.



Dr. H.B. London

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



September-October 2000

Volume 14, Number 1

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies:

How time flies! The luggage is unpacked, laundry done, mail sorted, bills paid, and e-mail checked. I have taken a few deep breaths and it is time to write another letter. We left a few weeks before Conference in Estes Park for vacation, but being away from home for four weeks does take its toll. However, those weeks were so wonderful that I came home renewed and richly rewarded.

We left Goshen July 26 and drove to Tracy's home in Powell, Ohio. Vacation actually started at noon on Sunday, July 30, with all six of us loaded into their van. We thanked the Lord for freeways, as we were able to drive to Davenport, Iowa, before stopping for the night.

Monday it was back on the road again to Mitchell, South Dakota. Of course, no stop in Mitchell would be complete without a visit to the Corn Palace. It has changed since we stopped there 24 years ago, but was equally interesting and unique. Then it was on to the magnificent sights of the Bad Lands, Devils Tower, Mt. Rushmore, and the Black Hills National Forest. Tuesday night was spent in Spearfish, South Dakota.

Wednesday we drove through Wyoming as far as Cody on the eastern side of Yellowstone National Park and the beginning of the gorgeous Rocky Mountains. We had a real treat when we attended the

(continued on page 4)

LESSONS AND BLESSINGS

By Sheri Rowser

Sheri and her husband, David, and two children were missionaries in Moldova, a former Soviet country in Eastern Europe. Sheri was the devotional speaker at the W.M.S. Conference. Excerpts of her very inspirational message are included in this meditation.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;*

Proverbs 3:5 (NIV)

Often I'm asked what I did while living in Moldova, and the only thing I did was to be obedient to God's calling on my life. In being obedient, God granted me the privilege of being a part of what He is doing in Moldova.

In this, I received numerous blessings.

- The blessing of seeing God's miraculous powers at work in lives of those around me, as well as in my own family.
- The blessing of beginning the first Vacation Bible School in our neighborhood with 36 children in 1997, then to see it grow to over 950 in 1999.
- The blessing of starting a Bible study for young women, inviting only two, but opening my door to 14 young women.
- The blessing to have had six volunteer men from Ohio build a basketball court in our yard and then the blessing of seeing 15 older teenage boys accept Christ the first time we had a program on the court.
- The blessing of our neighbor accepting Jesus as her Savior and her father allowing her to attend church, which he had previously forbidden.
- The blessing of sitting with my closest Moldovan girl friend as she accepted Jesus as her Savior.

And I could continue on and on with blessings!

Receiving all these blessings does not mean we never experienced any struggles. In fact, each day of each year was a struggle. I often sang the old song "One Day at a Time" as "One Minute at a Time." However, through all the struggles, God was always present to give His comfort, strength, and guidance. It was through these experiences I learned many things.

I learned about **faith** and how little I had. In Luke 18:8, Jesus asked, when He came, would He really find faith on earth? I'm thankful He can find more faith in me now than five years ago!

I learned how to truly **worship** God. I had depended too much on English words and songs for "surface" worship instead of giving God true worship. John 4:24 tells us the Father seeks true worshipers to worship Him!

I learned I had **no strength** of my own. When I finally accepted this, God said, "Good! Now you will depend on me!" As Jesus said in John 15:5, "for without Me, you can do nothing."

I learned about **prayer**. Miracles do not happen from time spent planning. Miracles happen when there has been time spent in prayer! Jesus told us in Matthew 17:20-21 that, if we had faith as a mustard seed, we could move mountains, but this happens only by prayer and fasting.

(continued on page 4)

HIGHLIGHTS OF W.M.S. CONFERENCE

Just as we anticipated, the General Conference at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado, was a beautiful mountaintop experience! From the mountains each of us prayed for and asked God to Renew our Spirit. He did!

In the Protestant Chapel at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs hangs the banner over the altar with the Bible verses from Psalm 121: "I will lift up my eyes to the hills. . . . My help comes from the Lord." This constant affirmation to the sometimes weary spirits of servicemen is what we experienced at the Conference. Although we left the mountains, we didn't leave the Source of our renewal. He abides with us! And is constantly helping and renewing!

The W.M.S. meeting was in the lovely Hyde Chapel. We gathered to meditate, while Marsha Nies (Mason-town) played the beautiful prelude, "It is Well with My Soul." Worship continued when DeAnn Oburn, vice president, led in the hymn of praise and prayer, "Cleanse Me," using the hymn tune of "Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise." Already we were being renewed.

The devotional speaker was Sheri Rowser, the daughter-in-law of our president, Charlene. Sheri and her family were missionaries from the Southern Baptist Church to Moldova, a former Soviet country, but now a small country between Romania and Ukraine in eastern Europe. Excerpts from Sheri's talk are on page 1 of this *Newsletter*.

In addition, Sheri said the country is very poor. There are two Protestant religions—Baptist and Pentecostal—although the state religion is eastern Orthodox. The Baptist is the larger and numbered about 330 in 1999, less than 2% of the entire population. There are 980 towns without any religion.

Economically the country is also destitute: unemployment is 40% of the country; the monthly pay is in the \$40-\$50 range, but even that amount is not regularly paid.

Sheri challenged us: do not be caught up in too much activity, even

though it may be good, that we neglect our prayer life. "Frequently," she said, "we spend too much time in planning and talking about prayer, but not enough time in actual prayer."

Due to Sheri's health problems, the Rowers will be assigned to another country with better medical facilities. Because of this, their hearts are grieved for all the unsaved in Moldova, since they will not have another opportunity to reach them. Sheri asked for our prayers for the next missionaries assigned to Moldova.

The project and thank offerings were received while Marsha played "The Gift of Love." Beautifully decorated baskets were provided by Vern Graft of Loree 1 and Marlene Dunn of Loree Charity.

The representative of each society received a memorial booklet prepared by Sharie Johnson and the Nappanee W.M.S. DeAnn concluded the ingathering and the memorials with a prayer of thanks—not only for our monetary gifts but also for the gifts of the dedicated lives of our deceased sisters in the Lord. Thirty-two ladies were recognized.

MISSIONARIES

It was a pleasure to welcome several missionaries! Their presence contributed to our mountaintop joys.

Sonia Antunez was thankful for prayers since she had recently undergone major surgery. For several years, she and her husband, Miguel, had tried unsuccessfully to secure visas to come to the States from Lima, Peru. When permission was finally granted, she did not allow recuperation to interfere!

Jenny Loi expressed her thanks for prayers last fall when she had throat problems. She was healed in time to sing in the Christmas cantata. Jenny and David had a devastating experience in July, when they were robbed and their van stolen. No one was hurt, but the van is needed in their ministry in Johor, Malaysia.

Chantal Logan and her husband, Mark, are assigned by the Eastern Mennonite Conference to Somalia, a country in eastern Africa, but they will live in Nairobi, Kenya, just across the border. Somalia is a Muslim country and has had no government for 10 years. Chantal requested prayer for protection, guidance, and wisdom to learn two more languages.

Nirmala Kumar brought greetings from the national pastors and all who are involved in the Indian ministry, including the women in the sewing classes and 70 children in the orphanages. She expressed her thanks for the prayers, love, and support given to the mission. Because of threats and bomb scares to missionaries, she is thankful for many people who use the prayer chapel every day and night; its light never goes out.

Tracy Ruggles thanked the ladies for their loving support during her pregnancy and for the wonderful gifts Johnathan received. She commented on the help and encouragement all of them—Jen Thomas, the national pastors and wives in Mexico City, she and her husband, Todd—received through our prayers and correspondence.

Nancy Hostetler sent greetings from Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, KY. She appreciated all the support, prayers, and encouragement she, her family, and the school received this year, especially after Doran's death.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

Mrs. Dorman (Joan) Ronk, Editor
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Women's Outlook Newsletter

Dee Keplinger, representative to the Missionary Ministries Council, reported that **Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri** were robbed in the Medellín, Colombia, airport of their visas, tickets, money, etc., just as they were leaving for Conference.

Every missionary thanked the ladies for the prayers, notes, greetings cards, and various remembrances they received. In fact, at the evening missionary service, one of the men exclaimed, "And those beautiful W.M.S. women who always remember us, just when we are down!" So, ladies, need I remind you to continue your prayers and your correspondence?



BUSINESS

Charlene Rowser presided over the business meeting.

The following committees served:

Credential Committee: Linda Immel (North Manchester) and Helen Garner (North Manchester) reported 52 delegates and 9 national officers, a total of 61. In addition, 28 guests were registered.

Nominating Committee: Dee Keplinger (Linwood) and Joanne Kroft (Ashland Garber) presented the following slate of officers: Vice President: Judi Gentle (Ashland Joy) and Suzanne Pennington (Oak Hill); Treasurer: Janet Rufener (Ashland Joy) and Ginny Hoyt (Ashland Joy).

The election followed.

Auditing Committee: Karen Weidenhamer (Ashland Joy) and Dee Keplinger (Linwood) audited the books of the Financial Secretary and the Literature Secretary and found them to be correct and in good order. The books of the Treasurer (Janet Rufener) were audited by the CPA firm in Loudonville and found to be correct in every way and in good order.

Nancy Hunn submitted the Statistician's report. Only 71 societies (84%) reported, but six districts had 100% of their societies reporting. Dues were received from 1,068 members. The new society at Canton Trinity, Hearts for Ministry, was

recognized. Fifteen societies increased in membership.

Joan Merrill, World Relief and Sewing Coordinator, reminded us that an auction will take place at the 2001 Conference. Hand-made articles, quilt squares, and quilts for the auction may be sent to Joan anytime. Now she has a twin-size quilt which is pieced, but needs to be quilted. Societies or ladies interested in quilting this for the auction may contact Joan, 9300 S. St. Rt. 3, Muncie, IN 47302. Phone: 765-289-2384.

The tellers reported the election: Vice President — Judi Gentle
Treasurer — Janet Rufener.

The president read the recommendation that the appointed officers be re-appointed:

General Secretary, Nancy Hunn
Assistant Secretary, Trudy Kerner
Literature Secretary, Donna Stoffer
Editor, *Devotional Guide*, Nancy Hunn

Editor, *Outlook Newsletter*, Joan Ronk

Subscription Secretary, Ginny Hoyt

World Relief and Sewing Coordinator, Joan Merrill

The recommendation was accepted by the Conference. The elected and the appointed officers were installed at the concluding General Conference session.

The president expressed appreciation to those who gave special contributions for the Conference: Marsha Nies for beautiful music; Sarah Hanna for designing the program cover; Sharie Johnson and the Napanee W.M.S. for the Memorial booklets; and to Vern Graft of Loree I and Marlene Dunn of Loree Charity for the Ingathering baskets.

FINANCES

Although the W.M.S. membership decreased slightly this year, the offerings remained constant and the amount to budget was almost the same as last year. You will remember that W.M.S. allocates money received previously; we do not spend in advance.

Janet Rufener, treasurer, presented the budget, as recommended by the executive board:

Benevolences	\$15,182
ATS	\$4,700
World/Home Missions	6,482
Campus Ministry	1,500
Riverside Christian School	1,500
Scholarship, AU	1,000
Publications	\$6,898
<i>Newsletter</i>	
<i>Devotional Guide</i>	
Other Expenses	\$1,720
Administrative	
Social Security	
Gifts and Conference	
Total	\$23,800

The Conference adopted the budget. In addition, Joanne Kroft reported that \$1,863 was received and forwarded to World Relief.

Conference approved the Executive Board's recommendation that the interest of \$2,500 from the Legacy Fund be given to the Missionary Ministries Council, designated for purchasing the property in India adjacent to the present compound.

Project

In 1999 two World Mission sites were accepted for the two-year project: Funds (1) to purchase a store front for worship in Malaysia, where David and Jenny Loi serve, and (2) to enlarge the church building in Peru where Miguel and Sonia Antunez serve.

Tentative totals to date are: Project: \$9,721.81; Thank Offering: \$8,846.73. If your society has not sent its project or thank offerings to Joanne Kroft, please do so quickly. Joanne's address is: 608 Twp. Rd. 1151, RD 5, Ashland, OH 44805.

Scholarship

Conference approved awarding the \$1,000 scholarship to Rachel Pennington. She is a senior at Ashland University and very active on campus in Hope Fellowship and the University Church, in addition to the National BYIC. Rachel is from Oak Hill, WV.



In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

Julia (Judy) Drever passed into Heaven July 29. She and her husband, Orville, were members of the **Tucson** Brethren Church since moving to Tucson in 1951. Judy was a member of the choir, assistant church treasurer, and W.M.S. treasurer. She was especially noted for her Christian devotion and service. Her door was always open to anyone in need. Judy is greatly missed.



The President's Pen (continued)

rodeo that night! Thursday we wound our way up and around the mountains into Yellowstone. We took the northern route, where we saw such amazing sights as Mammoth Hot Springs, the beautiful waterfalls, and a petrified tree. We spent the night in West Yellowstone. The next day we did the southern loop through the park, visited Old Faithful, shopped, and photographed animals, which were in abundance.

From Yellowstone we drove south through the Grand Tetons to Jackson and on to Cheyenne. More beautiful sights greeted us all the way. What an awesome God we have Who provided us with all this beauty!

Monday the journey from Cheyenne to Estes Park was short, compared to our other days. The drive from Loveland to Estes Park along the Big Thompson River was breathtaking and a bit scary! The Lord blessed and cared for us all the way, and we arrived at the Conference in plenty of time for the W.M.S. Executive Board meeting.

I'm closing this letter, my friends, with a promise to report about the Conference in my next letter. Until then, God bless.

With Christian love,

Charlene
Charlene

Lessons and Blessings

(continued)

The one lesson I am most thankful for is God showing me **I did not have a broken spirit** for people who were living without Him. I had a burden, or I wouldn't have gone to Moldova, but I wasn't broken. There is a difference. "Burden" means you want to tell others about the saving grace of Jesus. "Broken" means you not only want to tell them, but your spirit grieves at the thought of them dying and going to Hell. This is what brings you to your knees in prayer! As William Booth stated, "If we could spend one night in Hell, we could see the urgency of sharing Jesus."

In all these things—the blessings, the struggles, and the lessons—I realized how much I needed to **trust God**. The events in our lives do not always make sense. This is why God tells us in Proverbs 3:5 to trust Him with all our hearts and not to depend on our own understanding. I know no matter how difficult situations in my life may be, God is in control and His ways are perfect.

I also know, just as Job stated in Job 19:25, **My Redeemer Lives!**

Good News!

Fervent prayers are answered! During Conference Jim Black wrote that Shirley would have biopsies of three lumps. Conference was "on hold" while prayers were offered. On the scheduled day, only one lump was seen! When the report was returned, the tumor was benign! Shirley is at home again at Kingston of Ashland, Box 347, Ashland, OH 44805.

During this same time, Maria Miranda had a stroke and was hospitalized six days. At first her speech was only in English (not Spanish) and her right side was weak. Each day the doctors found her progress "unbelievable, dramatic, and unexpected." Yet Juan Carlos knew it was miraculous! Now at home, therapy has strengthened her body, and her language is much better. Maria's address is: 207 S. Grand Oaks, Pasadena, CA 91107.

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

Just because Conference is over, I'm not going to forget it. Always it is a pleasure to see so many friends and this year we had the opportunity to share a meal with others, many whom we did not know. It's good Brethren fellowship to break bread together!

Speakers seem to be better and more inspirational, although I may be the one more open to hearing what God will say through them to me. In his Monday message, Dr. Dan Lawson set the tone for the week. He used Hebrews 12:1-3 as his text and said "It is OK to be like Him," but first we have to throw off the sins that entangle us and run with patience. Patience includes endurance and perseverance. All the time, our eyes are fixed on Jesus!

But I like these entangling "things" that blur! True, they blur my vision and I can not focus on Jesus! So it's time to get rid of them!

Now I am ready for the Lord to renew my soul. In the middle of "perseverance" is "ever." I want to **persevere** so this renewal will last for ever.

This summer I read **Living Beyond the Limits** by Franklin Graham. He and his sister, Anne Graham Lotz, attended a breakfast hosted by President Clinton. In the after-breakfast chat, she addressed the group and stated that the United States has a spiritual problem. The right place to begin remedying this is with the Ten Commandments. Mrs. Lotz challenged the nation's leaders to repent and walk with God and follow His commandments.

In November we will have the opportunity to vote for the next president of the United States. Be in prayer for the candidates and ask God to guide your decisions. As Anne stated, "If we don't walk with God, we can't walk with man."

Your friend,

Joan
Joan

Women's Outlook Newsletter

than there were nine years ago, while the population has grown eleven percent. But the bottom line of church growth has very little to do with numbers and buildings. We have been sold a bill of goods when we believe that bigger is better. The bottom line of the church of Jesus Christ is spelled out in one simple question, "Is anyone getting saved here?"

Dr. London mentioned the title of the movie, *Dead Man Walking*. The title is the traditional cry of the guards when a prisoner begins his

last march to execution. He said, "We are surrounded by dead men and women walking." In a nation of 270,000,000 souls, less than 35 percent can answer affirmatively the question, "If you died today, do you know where you would be?" They are spiritually dead and will end up that way eternally unless someone reaches them.

With obvious emotion, Dr. London lamented, "We sit in board meetings talking about this and that and the other. How often do we look each other in the eye and say, 'Is anyone getting saved here?'" [†]

Rev. Stone is pastor of the First Brethren Church of Sarasota, Fla.

This year's General Conference presented many added challenges because it was held so far from Ashland. These were all very capably handled by Berniece Miller, seen in the photo at left with Dr. H.B. London prior to his Friday morning workshop. Berniece spent many, many hours before Conference taking care of details related to speakers, schedule, logistics, registration, lodging, and other aspects of Conference. Then during Conference week she was continually busy answering questions, caring for people's needs, and in many other ways making sure that everything ran smoothly.



H.B. London talks about being a healthy church

"I'm more concerned with the health of a church than the size of the church," said H.B. London in his workshop on the concluding morning of Conference. "If the church is healthy," he continued, "it will have a normal growth within the parameters of your denomination and your doctrine. And that is really an important thing to say."

For a definition of a healthy church, he read Ephesians 4:25-5:2, which speaks of putting off falsehood and speaking truthfully; of not letting unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up; of getting rid of bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice; of being kind and compassionate to one another; of forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you; of imitating God; of living a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

Later in his message, alluding to this passage, London said, "One of the great problems of the church today is because we think somewhere along the way that all the rules in the Bible are meant for

everybody else and not for us. [But] you cannot hold bitterness or malice in your heart and be right with God."

Churches make two big mistakes, London said. The biggest is comparing themselves with somebody else. The second biggest is saying we don't matter and walking around with our heads down. Determine what your church does best and build on that, London said. Then determine the second thing you do best and build on that; and the third thing; etc.

In looking at the health of the church, London spoke at length about the problem of pastoral resignations, noting that in the U.S. 1,000 to 1,500 pastors leave the pastorate every month! He commented on several of the main contributing causes of these resignations.

The number-one cause is resistance to pastoral leadership. London expressed some dismay that churches would employ a pastor and then not follow his leadership. The second was unwritten expectations of the pastor. Whenever a pastor takes a church, he should tell the church, "This is what you can expect of me," and the church should tell the pastor, "This is

The Power of Grace

(continued from page 7)

feet (only servants went barefoot), and to make a celebration.

The father also displayed his grace to the older son. When this son didn't join the celebration, the father went out to him (normally a servant would have been sent). And he pleaded (another act of humiliation) with the son to come in.

The message of the parable is that God sacrifices all His dignity in order to establish a relationship with us. That relationship can only be received by accepting God's grace. Taking note of his audience, Dr. Blue warned, "Grace is difficult for good people—who work hard and do good. [But] grace is the only way that you enter into and participate in the kingdom of God."

"Do you understand grace or not?" Dr. Blue asked. "If you don't understand grace, the kingdom of God isn't open to you, because you only get in through grace."

Dr. Blue concluded with this plea: "If you are in the far country, come home. And if you are in the Father's house, but lost to this deeper, more profound relationship, come home. The message is the same to good people and to bad people, because they are all forgiven. The message is, 'Come home!'"

— reported by Richard Winfield, editor

what we expect of you." No pastor should "ever, ever, ever" take a church without having a written contract that spells out the terms of employment and that says, "This is what is expected of you," London said.

Other reasons for pastoral resignation include resistance to change by the congregation; corporate spiritual defeat (the whole church has given up); burnout; conflict; and discouragement (can't see any progress; can't use pastoral gifts; problems with difficult members, not receiving affirmation; in need of rest and refreshment).

Going back to where he began (Eph. 4:25-5:2), London concluded, "I beg you to read . . . that passage of scripture that I read to you this morning. And if you apply it to your lives and to the body of Christ, I guarantee you that not only will it be a great church, but it will be a healthy church. And a healthy church always is attractive to people who come from the outside. When they look in they need to see you loving one another, because if you can't love one another, does it make any sense that you would love the unlovely on the outside?"

— reported by Richard Winfield, editor

Friday: Closing Session

A Brethren Journey of Desire

Reported by Dan Lawson

Conference concluded Friday morning with a combined youth-adult session held in the Longhouse. It began with jubilant praise of God in song, led by the Spirit 2000 Praise Team. It continued with an installation of the new General Conference officers and BYIC Steering Committee members followed by a Concert of Prayer, both led by Rev. Dave Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church. It concluded with a message by the outgoing General Conference Moderator, Dr. John Shultz.

Following is a summary of the message by Dr. Shultz, prepared by Dan Lawson, Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church.

DR. JOHN SHULTZ concluded his term of service as moderator of General Conference by giving an address that was one of the highlights of this year's Conference. He began with the statement, "We were created with desire and deep longing." He noted that when the Conference was over, we would leave the mountain and go back to our homes, but that God does not want us to go back on the desires that He planted in our hearts while we were there.



The aptly-named Longhouse, where the BYIC Convention sessions and the combined youth-adult sessions were held during Conference week.

"Desire gets tarnished," John I said, "and the greatest tragedy, perhaps even greater than the fall, is that we get used to it. We settle for less, and our eyes adjust to the [spiritual] darkness." Since we have allowed ourselves to get used to the darkness, our lives are filled with desperation and hopelessness. Still, that deep abiding desire burns within, and if we can clean enough of the tarnish away, we can



Dr. John Shultz

"that we have more of the power of the Holy Spirit." In John 14:12 Jesus said that we would receive power to do "even greater things" than He did. In Luke 9 we see that the followers of Christ were given the power to cast out demons. In Luke 10, when Jesus sent out His disciples two by two, He gave them the power to "proclaim [the Gospel] and heal."

If we believe that God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, then shouldn't we also believe that He will give His disciples today that same power? John pointed to Luke 11, where Jesus said that if we do not have that full measure of His power, we are to keep knocking and knocking. In other words, "Don't let the desire die!"

In Luke 11:13 Jesus asks, "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" John left us with this question, "Will you ask?" [✠]



Emotions ran high as Conference came to an end. The Brethren had been blessed, challenged, and inspired, and so they poured out their praises to God in song, as the Spirit 2000 Praise Team led them to "... Lift Up the Lord" and "Shout to the Lord."

A group picture of some of the missionaries at Conference: Back row, l. to r., Miguel and Sonia Antúnez (with grandson Andre, hiding his face) from Peru; Jenny and David Loi from Malaysia; Nir-mala (with daughter and son-in-law Shanti and Vincent Edwin) and Prasanth Kumar from India; David and Sheri Rowser (behind Nirmala and Shanti), Baptist missionaries with Breth-



ren family connections; and, far right, Sebastian Valli, a member of the worship team from Argentina. Front row, l. to r., Tracy and Todd Ruggles, with baby Johnathan, who serve in Mexico City; José Rivero, president of The Brethren Church in Argentina; and Mark and Chantal Logan, who will begin serving in Somalia this fall for the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions.

Missionaries at Conference



Jen Thomas serves with Todd and Tracy Ruggles in Mexico City.

A SPECIAL BLESSING of this General Conference was having all but one family of our international missionaries in attendance. Because of the special celebratory nature of this Conference (the first of the new century and the new millennium), a decision was made to invite all our missionaries to attend, including those who are jointly supported by Brethren in Argentina and the United States.

Only one missionary family was not able to attend, the Marcelo and Adriana Ferreri family, who serve in Medellín, Colombia. The Ferreris were on their way to the U.S. when they were robbed of their tickets, passports, and money while still in Bogotá.* Because of this loss, they were forced to return to Medellín.

Having the remaining missionary families at the Conference throughout the week gave Brethren at Conference many informal opportunities to see them, get to know them, fellowship with them, ask them questions, and learn more about their work. In addition, during a Missions Presentation on Wednesday morning, all of the missionaries had an opportunity to tell about their work, share prayer requests, and express gratitude for the prayers, cards and letters, and financial support of the Brethren.

**This is the second Brethren missionary family to suffer a major loss by theft this year. On July 15 David and Jenny Loi, our missionaries serving in Malaysia, were robbed of their money and of the church van. Fortunately, in neither case were the missionaries themselves harmed physically.*



Eduardo and Mariela Rodriguez (with baby Camila) direct the South American Seminary in Argentina.



Claudio and Karina Castelli, Brethren from Argentina, serve as missionaries in Paraguay. Though they speak very little English, it was a blessing to have them at Conference.



Joe and Aleta Shultz, though not officially missionaries, serve as English teachers at a Christian college in Taiwan.

Business Sessions

BUSINESS SESSIONS of the 1112th General Conference of The Brethren Church were short and harmonious, to the delight of delegates, who preferred being outside enjoying the beautiful weather and marvelous scenery to being inside dealing with business details. Nevertheless, several significant matters were handled in the brief business sessions held Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

One of the more noteworthy was a change in the Manual of Procedure concerning the way new Brethren churches are formed and recognized. What this did essentially was change the "normal process" for the development and recognition of a church from a 3-step process (class, mission congregation, church) to a 2-step process (mission, church).

The change also gives missions "the privileges and responsibilities afforded by General Conference," including the *privilege* of "elder and the minimum number of lay credentials" [formerly mission congregations received only elder credentials] and the *responsibility* of "full support of district and denominational ministries" [formerly mission congregations were "encouraged but not

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support to denominational ministry apportionments"]. The change still allows for formation of classes "under special circumstances," but a class has no delegate status.

Before the above change was made (i.e., while still operating under the old system), Conference changed the status of Living Waters Community Church of Mansfield, Ohio, (pastored by Ronald Miller) from class to mission congregation. And it recognized Centro Cristiano Para la Familia of Pasadena, Calif., (led by Juan Carlos and Maria Miranda) as a class.

Delegates approved budgets for Congregational Ministries and Missionary Ministries as presented by the Executive Board. The Congregational Ministries budget anticipates total income of \$725,670 and total expenses of \$704,670, which would result in a net gain of \$21,000. The Missionary Ministries budget anticipates total income of \$1,051,000 and total expenses of \$1,081,428, which would result in a net loss of \$30,428.

In elections, Dr. Leroy Solomon was elected to a three-year term as General Conference moderator. A former pastor, Dr. Solomon currently serves as Dean of Institutional Development for Ashland Theological Seminary. Roger Stogsdill

was elected to a three-year term on the Congregational Ministries Council, and Dale Stoffer was re-elected for a three-year term on the Missionary Ministries Council. Members of the various Conference committees were also elected.

Looking ahead to the tri-centennial of the Breth-

ren movement in 2008, delegates approved a motion to establish a joint planning committee with the six historical Brethren groups to plan a celebration of that milestone. Similarly, denominational leaders were directed to contact leaders of Ashland University to plans ways for The Brethren Church to participate with the university in the year 2003 in celebrating 125 years of the school's ministry.

Acting on a concern raised by Brethren Missionary Mark Logan that too little emphasis is being given in The Brethren Church to international missions, delegates approved Logan's motion that Con-

Statistician's report in brief

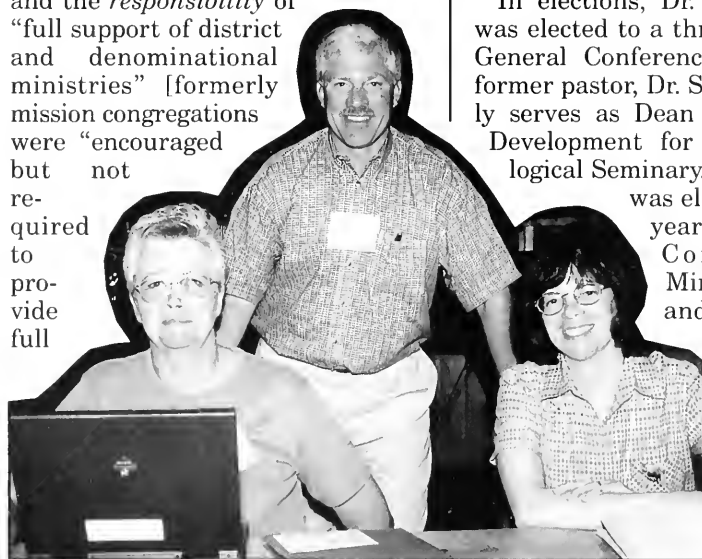
	1998	1999
Total congregations	116	118
Total membership	13,494	13,227
Worship Attendance	12,515	12,154
S.S. Attendance	6,396	6,224
Conversions	392	412
Total gains	702	739
Reversions	649	621
Total losses	1,064	1,006
Net loss of members	362	267

ference instruct the Executive Board to rediscover the full meaning of Matthew 18:18-20 and rededicate its efforts into identifying opportunities, channeling resources, and inviting Brethren people of all ages to become actively involved in carrying out the Great Commission outside the United States and in ways that embrace the traditional Brethren understanding of the Kingdom of God.

Delegates were given copies of a report book that included various denominational reports as well as reports from ancillary organizations and Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary. Delegates were given an opportunity to ask questions about each of these reports, and then a motion was made and passed to receive all of the reports. (*Copies of the report book are available from the National Office.*)

The total delegate count for the Conference was 371, up ten from last year. In addition, many other Brethren from across the denomination attended the Conference as non-delegates.

— reported by Richard Winfield, editor



Conference business sessions were efficiently and amiably handled by Moderator John Shultz, with Cheryl Schmiedt (L.) taking the minutes, assisted by Ginny Hoyt. In addition to helping with minutes, Ginny, administrative assistant for Missionary Ministries, played a major behind-the-scenes role in this Conference by making travel arrangements for the many missionaries who attended this Conference (see previous page), as well as for the numerous guests from Argentina.

Honorably mentioned

SPACE does not permit coverage of everything that took place during Conference. But several other sessions need to be mentioned.

Each morning of Conference week began with a half hour of Praise and Devotions. The Spirit 2000 Praise Team led the time of praise on Tuesday morning, and Rev. Bill Wright, pastor of Northwest Community Church in Tucson, gave the devotions. Speaking to the Conference theme, Pastor Wright said that renewal must come from God. We must change our focus from our weakness to God's strength.

Both the music and the devotions on Wednesday morning were led by the praise team from Argentina. Team leader Eduardo Rodriguez introduced sacrifice as the devotional theme for the morning. Then three members of the team, Gustavo Estabillo, Verónica Ulla de Petracca, and Alvaro DeCarlo, gave personal testimonies of sacrifice.

Scott Ailes presented the prelude, Rev. Tom Schiefer led the singing, and

Rev. Gene Oburn, pastor of the Loree Brethren Church, gave the devotions on Thursday morning. Using John 15:1-8 as his text, Pastor Oburn emphasized that we have to be connected to Jesus in order to bear fruit that glorifies God.

Rev. David Rowser, son of retired Brethren pastoral couple Rev. Don and Charlene Rowser, gave the devotional message Friday morning. Drawing on his experience as a Baptist missionary in Moldova, Rev. Rowser emphasized that all of us are missionaries with a responsibility to share the Gospel message wherever we are. Music was again led by the Spirit 2000 Praise Team.

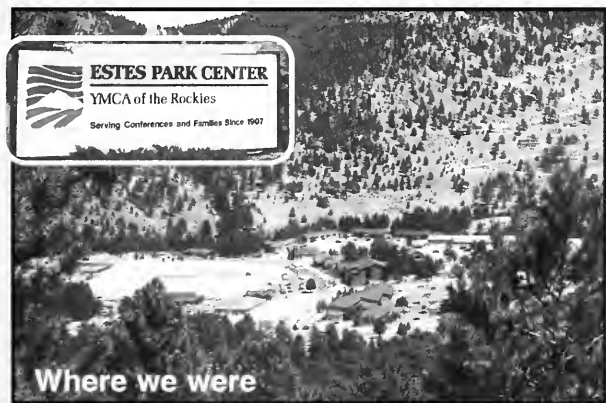
Two other workshops were given in addition to the five summarized on the preceding pages. On Thursday morning, Rev. Bill Wright and two men from Northwest Community Church presented an excellent workshop entitled, "It's More Than a Technique: a Biblical Model for Church Growth." A summary of this

workshop, which is also available on audio cassette (see page 3), will be included in next month's EVANGELIST.

On Thursday afternoon, Terry Wardle, whose workshop on the Holy Spirit is summarized on pages 5 and 7, gave a second workshop—"Catching God's Vision for Church Planting." This workshop is, likewise, available on audio cassette.

Also on Thursday afternoon, a Church-Planting Forum was held. This forum gave Brethren church-planters a chance to tell about their work, share some of the blessings and frustrations of that work, talk about plans for what's ahead, express appreciation for prayers in the past, and request continued prayers.

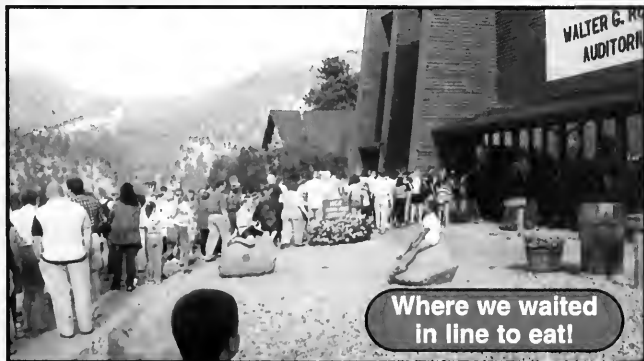
Those sharing were Pastor Jim Thomas of Eagle's Nest Christian Fellowship; Pastor Jim and Stephanie Boyd of Rock Springs Community Church; Pastor Jim and Ann Miller of Oasis Community Church; Pastor Jeff Kaplan of Rocky Mountain Community Church; and Pastor Pat and Kathy Velanzon of Cross Keys Worship Center. One of the great things that came out in these reports was the many people (more than 100) who have accepted Christ and been baptized in these churches in the past year. [✠]



Where we were



Where we stayed



Where we waited in line to eat!



Some of the children at Conference with children's program assistant Alyson Pflugfelder

BYIC Convention 2000

Estes Park, Colorado



Convention report by

Jamie Gillespie

National Youth Leader

WHEN THE BYIC (Brethren Youth in Christ) went to Colorado, we expected to have a great Convention. What we got was more than we expected. The 2000 BYIC Convention was not just great, it was amazing! It was once again a reminder that God can do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Eph. 3:20). When almost 600 youth and adult sponsors gathered to worship God in the Rocky Mountains, God showed up! This article will attempt to tell you how.

Monday

From the very beginning of the week, it was evident that God had great plans for us. As youth arrived from all over the country, the atmosphere was one of excitement as we saw old friends, met new ones, and were overwhelmed by the majesty of

the mountains that surrounded us.

On Monday evening we came together for our first celebration of God's majesty. Feeding 5000, an up-and-coming band from Tucson, Arizona, along with our Convention Worship Team led by Stephanie Boyd and members of the Rock Springs Community Church Worship Team, helped us all get excited and come into the presence of God.

Dr. Lee Solomon spoke about how "God Digs Us." He challenged the youth to make themselves an open book before God, because He knows us and loves us anyway. Dr. Solomon also challenged the youth to accept who they are, to accept that they are exactly who God created them to be, and to open themselves to the work that God still wants to do in them. The youth took that challenge, and throughout the week we witnessed many young people opening themselves to God's call.

Monday night ended with a Christian dance with DJ Rachel Pennington. This was a great time to relax, honor God through music and

dance, and show the youth that Christians *can* dance, sing, and have fun while honoring God.

Tuesday

Tuesday began early with some brave souls getting up around 5:30 to watch the sun rise over the mountains, to do early morning devotions, or to hike to Bible Point for a time of prayer and celebration. The morning session was led by Mark Ray, who challenged the youth to take a step of faith and follow God wherever He calls. Mark's own life is a demonstration of the message he presented. Mark sold all of his possessions and, the week after the Convention, left his family, home, and friends in order to follow God's call to Ireland, where he will work with youth in that battle-stricken country. Mark's dedication to the

Photo above: The All-Convention Group Picture. Full-color, 10 x 16 inch copies are available for \$15.00 from Photos by Dill, 970-586-8736. Reorder # 2122. (Copyright © Photos by Dill, Inc.; used by permission.)

Lord and the youth of Ireland were a testimony in themselves!

After this session, we loaded into busses to experience the beauty of Rocky Mountain National Park. As if that wasn't enough for one day, we returned in the afternoon to dive into a series of workshops on various methods of worshiping God.

The first workshop, "The Heart of Worship," encouraged the youth to focus on *why* we worship instead of worrying so much about *how* we worship. The youth learned that it doesn't matter whether our churches sing hymns or praise choruses; use an organ or have a band; clap and raise their hands in praise or sit in quiet reverence. What matters is that we worship to honor God, to come into His presence, and to focus our minds and hearts on Him who is the *Heart of Worship*.

The second workshop was entitled "Music to God's Ears." It focused on how music can be used to honor or dishonor God.

Tuesday evening the adults joined the youth for a combined worship service with speaker Sally Morgenthaler. Sally addressed the issue of post-modernism and how the church can reach out to a generation and a

world that is so influenced by technology. This message was very valuable for youth, who are at the center of this fast-paced whirlwind of computers, e-mail, cell phones, and other technology. Sally pointed out



A spontaneous altar call during the preliminary part of the communion service on Wednesday evening resulted in a number of young people going forward to accept the Lord.

that people in this post-modern world are looking for God's face, and that as a church, we need to help them find Him.

Wednesday

On Wednesday, after more early-morning activities, the youth once again came together for an incredible session. Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, brought a message about what it means to be a disciple. Dave told the youth that

being a disciple involves living the life one's teacher lives. It is more than getting to know what the teacher knows—it is getting to be what the teacher is. Dave encouraged the youth by emphasizing that they are not the *future* of the church; they are the *now* of the church.

Wednesday morning also brought the Convention informational session, a.k.a., "the busi-

ness meeting." In this session the National BYIC Steering Committee explained what they had done in the past year, what had happened with BYIC, and also introduced a new structure for the Steering Committee that centers around two-year terms instead of the one-year terms of the past. In this session districts were also able to nominate youth to serve on the new Steering Committee.

Wednesday afternoon was packed full of fun, as youth went white-water rafting, horseback riding, shopping, or had a good time "hanging out" at the YMCA. It was a great time to relax and enjoy the company of all our friends.

To begin the evening, the youth spent a quiet hour alone with God on their

"Prayer Squares" (small pieces of carpet). During this time, they were encouraged to search their souls and empty their hearts before God in preparation for the evening communion service.

The communion service began with more inspiring worship led by the Convention Worship Team. This was also a time for youth to come forward and tell how God was at work in their lives. This simple testimony time turned into a life-changing altar call when Pastor Brad Whitehead stepped forward and let God speak through Him. Many youth came to know God that evening, and hundreds more came forward to recommit to following Him.

But this was just the beginning! We then separated the gals and the guys, and both groups headed out to commune with God in the shadow of the mountains. Our communion service, complete with Love Feast, footwashing (using water from bottles!), and the Eucharist, was one of the simplest, yet most soul-touching events that many of the youth had ever experienced! It led into more worship and a night so God-filled that we never wanted it to end!

Thursday

After an emotion-filled night, the youth had most of Thursday to enjoy various activities such as



National Youth Leader Jaime Gillespie (l.), seen here chatting with Brenda Tober on the final day of the BYIC Convention, spent countless hours planning and preparing for the Convention and overseeing the event itself.



Dr. Charles Munson, popular with kids of all ages, received the "Anchor Award" from the BYIC Convention in recognition of his dedication to the Lord and his love for youth. Dr. Munson was especially popular this year with his red "scooter," on which he "scooted around" the Conference/Convention grounds. Joining him here is Andre Antunez, grandson of Rev. Miguel and Sonia Antunez, Brethren missionaries who serve in Lima, Peru.

more rafting and riding, indoor wall climbing, an aerial tramway trip, and much more. Thursday afternoon we finished up our series of workshops with sessions on "Honoring God With Your Life" and

Conference evaluations

The National Office staff would like to thank all those who took the time to share their thoughts about General Conference 2000. We want you to know that we read every evaluation and that all comments are sincerely appreciated.

We are continually seeking fresh ideas and ways to make our annual Conference a meaningful, worshipful, and convenient experience for all who attend. We consider your feedback an important tool in shaping future Conferences, and, quite frankly, we would like to hear from more of you.

Your assessments of this year's Conference once again reflected the splendid diversity of The Brethren Church, yet they included several common themes. Broadly categorized, your

"Alternative Forms of Worship." In these, the youth were challenged to look at everything they do in life (how they talk, dress, and act as well as when they are playing sports, writing poetry, doing dramas, etc.) as opportunities to honor God.

Thursday evening once again saw youth on their knees crying out to God, as Dr. Rickey Bolden challenged them to stop being "chickens" and instead to be the "eagles" that God intends us to be. Rickey said, "God never designed us to be losers. We are eagles. Don't ever let anyone tell you who you are. Society can never change you."

Rickey warned the youth that hanging out with non-Christians, or "chickens," can make you think and act like one. Instead of being chickens in a world of chickens, Rickey challenged us to be eagles and to stand up for Christ. At the close of the service, hundreds of youth flooded the altar vowing that they were not going to be chickens anymore, but eagles for Christ!

Friday

To close our week, Rev. Tony Price led us in a morning session on the importance of fellowship. He challenged us to make sure we are not making our groups "exclusive," but to make them inclusive so that others can come in and have fellowship with us.

Following this message we again

comments indicated that we should continue to focus on three areas:

- Scheduling and length of programs
- Relevance of the speaker's message
- Diversity in worship music and style

Clearly, the Estes Park location and facilities presented unique challenges that impacted certain aspects of the Conference agenda. As a result, we have gained greater insight into planning future Conferences at resort-type locations.

As for next year, we are encouraged by what you have suggested, and we are already looking at different ways to implement your recommendations. We remain committed to excellence in all of our Conference presentations, and we welcome your thoughts as we plan for next year. [†]

joined with the adults to end the week. At this service, two very important people who have dedicated their time and their energy to serving the Lord and loving youth were recognized. These two people were Carol Smith of New Paris, Indiana, who was the recipient of the "Barr Award"; and Dr. Charlie Munson, who received the "Anchor Award." The BYIC expressed its thanks to these two people for their years of dedicated service and love!

During this service our new National BYIC Steering Committee was also announced. The committee members are Jason Barnhart, Matt Helsley, Tim Hess, Carrie Lingenfelter, Erin Simon, Sam Shultz, and Carl Yoder.

Summary

If I had to summarize the BYIC Convention in a few words, I would simply have to say that "God showed up." His presence was felt in every activity, was heard through every word spoken, and was felt in every heart. [†]

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A newsletter for Brethren people

October 2000



Pastoral Care: *Who Cares?*

By Brian H. Moore

THE YEAR WAS 1991. A parishioner, perhaps ahead of her time and certainly ahead of my thinking, wrote me a note in response to an article she had read in *Parade* magazine in the Sunday paper. The article was entitled "Ministers Under Stress." The parishioner wrote:

Brian, after reading this lead article, I thought the subject ought to be considered in our Long-Range Planning Committee meeting. Somehow (it should) be part of our vision for how we treat our pastors. Only you could help us with that. There must be ways we can help, requiring less of your time. Let us know your dreams, wishes, plans or whatever about what we really can do. As the article says, if you don't do something about it (taking care of yourself), nobody else will. We need to know how to help.

In the years since that article appeared, the subject of "ministers under stress" has received a great deal of attention. I have given it a great deal of attention myself, for myself and for my colleagues. It is now a "hot" subject!

But why is it a hot subject? Is this "much adieu about nothing"? Is it a fad that will soon pass (as all other fads do, which is the reason they are fads)? Or is this a problem that will be with us well into the future?

I believe that it is a problem that is here to stay, or at least to stay as long as we Americans continue our frenzied pace; as long as we Americans, all of us, are stressed out; and



About this issue

October 2000 has been designated Ministry Appreciation Month in The Brethren Church. One way to show appreciation for those who minister as pastors and leaders is to be concerned about and to care for their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

That is the focus of several articles in this issue of the *EVANGELIST*. Three of the articles were written by members of the Leadership Care Study Group, and the fourth was written at the request of this group.

The Leadership Care Study Group is a task force of the Congregational Ministries Council of The Brethren Church. Its members care deeply about the well-being of pastors and other leaders in our denomination, and they are seeking ways that we Brethren can provide appropriate and effective leadership care at the local, district, and denominational levels of the church.

as long as the general decay and decline of society continues. It's a problem that will continue as long as pastors are willing to get involved with the messes people have made of their lives or the messes that life has made of people. And it's a problem that will continue as long as pastors and lay people alike seem to deny that pastors are human beings

who cannot be all things to all people all the time.

In other words, pastors today minister in a context that is particularly conducive to stress and overload. Being a pastor today is not the same as it was 20 or 30 years ago, or—for that matter—even 10 years ago. Changes in society and culture have added to the pressures that have always been part of being a pastor.

Rampant busyness

One of the shifts that adds to the pressure of pastoring, making it more difficult to be effective, is the rampant busyness of nearly everyone. If pastoring is primarily about relationships (and I believe it is), it has become extremely difficult to develop those relationships in a society that has become a lot like beltway traffic: each of us in our own vehicle (our private lives), speeding toward our chosen or assigned destination, looking neither right nor left, viewing others as obstacles to our progress ("Get out of

(continued on next page)

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A document *The Pastoral Care Committee in the Local Church* is in the center of this issue.

my way!”), obsessed with our own obsessions. Occasionally we may see acquaintances in another vehicle, and we may even wave. They may not see us wave because they have their own agendas. But even if they do see us, and even if they return our wave, it can hardly be thought of as relationship-building.

Pastoring is more difficult than it used to be because the pace of life is not conducive to the traditional approach to pastoring. It is genuinely difficult to get together with others in ways that will make a difference in their lives. The isolationism that is a result of this lifestyle causes people to be lonely. And it causes pastors to feel even lonelier than their calling normally would occasion them to be. Who cares? Who can find it possible to care in such a fast-paced, overloaded way of life?

Indifference to the church

Another shift that has affected the life of the pastor is society's indifference to the church (and subsequently to pastors). This is something that is relatively new in our country. Society today is not for the most part church-friendly, as it once was. We may not be facing overt resistance or persecution, but we are suffering from neglect. Who cares what goes on in church buildings?

Knowing that this attitude prevails has led us to think that if we could only find better ways to “package” the Gospel, people would come to our churches. So pastors, under stress because people aren't paying attention to the church or to their ministries, feel the need to make church-life exciting. But it isn't working! So as a result, pastors feel marginalized. The “high and holy calling” isn't getting respect!

Family and values breakdown

Two other factors that make pastoring more difficult than it used to be are the widespread breakdown of the family and the widespread disregard for the values promoted by the Christian faith. I put these two together because quite often they are interrelated. While the gap has widened between church and society, society needs the church more than ever. The church, and thus the pastor, has become “a voice in the wilderness” of this world. The heartbeat of the pastor is constantly being challenged because the pastor knows something of the answer for society's crying needs, yet society ignores that answer. Who cares?

Who cares? Well we who are members of the Leadership Care Study Group of the Congregational Ministries Council are convinced that someone had better step up soon to care for pastors who are stressed out, burned out, worn out, checking out, and generally frustrated with trying to bring their calling to bear upon a world (and sometimes a church) that doesn't seem to care what they are going through.

Suggestion one: establish a Pastoral Care Committee

Two suggestions are paramount in answering the question, “Who cares?” The first suggestion is that every church establish a Pastoral Care (or Pastoral Concern) Committee. (See the document in the center of this issue for guidelines for establishing this committee.) Just three people can make a huge difference in how a pastor and the pastor's family feel about life and ministry. If a local church is the Body of Christ, then it likely has members who

have a heart for the well-being of their pastor. They are caring people by nature. Why not direct their capacity for caring and encouraging others toward the pastor and the pastor's family? Every pastor needs to have some people in his or her life who will listen to, pray with, and encourage that pastor, and who will be an advocate for his or her well-being. It's just too tough these days for a pastor to try to live out this calling as “one solitary life.”

Suggestion two: practice pastoral self-care

Our second suggestion is for pastors to practice self-care. No Pastoral Care Committee can accompany a pastor on a 24-hour basis. Only the pastor is with himself or herself 24-hours a day. There can be no substitute for self-care.

The pastor must pay attention to his or her own signals, to his or her own self-talk, to sensations of being out of control or out of balance in any number of possible areas (eating, indolence, overwork, emotions, anger, exhaustion, motivation, spiritual condition, relationships, commitments). Paying attention must then lead to action steps to remedy the problem.

Who cares? Even if no one else cares, the pastor must care for himself or herself. It may sound selfish to do so and unworthy of our self-giving calling, but it is no more self-serving than changing the oil in one's car or sharpening the blades on the lawn mower or going to bed at night.

Other men look to their tools; a painter will wash his pencils; a (black)smith will look to his hammer, anvil and forge . . . a musician

(continued at bottom of next page)

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Pontius' Puddle



Editor's note: If this is the way your pastor feels, you definitely need to read the articles in this issue of the EVANGELIST!



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Barriers to Pastoral Self-Care

By Judy Allison

WHEN IT COMES to the topic of self-care in ministry, this I know: Our Brethren leaders do not simply need one more person—or one more task force—telling them that they *should* take care of themselves. Nor do they only need basic *how-to* information on the practice and implementation of self-care.

If *should* and *how-to* were the essential ingredients to taking better care of ourselves, none of us would be overweight. We know when our weight is at an unhealthy level and we know the “magic formula” to lower that number on the scales—we simply have to take in fewer calories than we burn off. When we desire to do something, know how to do it, and yet don’t do it, some barrier is at play.

Do you need to eat right, get enough sleep, spend time on your own spiritual growth, balance family life with church life, and have a safe place to share your heart? Absolutely! Will these things happen if you are told

enough times that you *should* do them? Probably not.

It is not the desire of the Leadership Care Study Group to provide a simplistic self-care formula that ignores how difficult and complex this issue really is. It can be extremely difficult in ministry to find a balance between taking care of yourself and taking care of all those who look to you for nurture, guidance, answers, and support.

In preparation for writing an upcoming publication on self-care for Brethren leaders, I prayerfully asked the Lord for His heart on this topic. I had gathered information, compiled resources, and compared the opinions of those currently writing on this subject. But I did not feel that what I was finding reflected the real issue of why those in church leadership neglect the practice of self-care.

After spending time in prayer, I became convinced that our Heavenly Father has strong feelings about this neglect of self-care by those whom He has called to minister in His power and in His name. I’ve also come to believe that there are two areas we must examine if self-care is to happen. They are:

1. How important is it that our leaders practice self-care?
2. Whose permission do our leaders need in order to feel free to invest time in personal care? On this second point, I will address the

question “Is self-care okay with God, with the church, and with leaders themselves?”

How important is self-care?

How important is it that our leaders practice personal self-care? I would suggest that self-care must become a priority. Leadership care can no longer be viewed as a luxury; it must be seen as a necessity. When our leaders are nourished, renewed, and well-cared for, our church bodies can be healthy, vital, and in position for renewal.

When shepherds are not taking time to rest and to be restored, they lose strength and vision for finding green pastures—places of rest—for their sheep. When shepherds are not themselves drinking, they cannot lead their sheep to streams of living water. And when shepherds have *unattended* wounds or sheep bites, they focus on survival or avoidance rather than on guiding and restoring the flock.

Self-care is not a selfish act, nor is it a luxury to be done when all else has

been completed. We know that in any type of ministry, the work is never done. Therefore, when self-care is relegated to the bottom of the list, it will never be integrated into the daily life of the pastor.

Is self-care okay with God?

Is self-care okay with God? I am often amazed at the number of believers who are well-read in the Scriptures—who know the ins and outs of the Bible—who nevertheless miss the many instances of self-care practiced by Jesus. Much of what Jesus did with His time is not recorded in the Bible. Even so a number of incidences are reported when Jesus dismissed the crowds and withdrew to be with His disciples or to pray

(continued on page 5)



The voice of our Father must be the one to which a pastor responds, and the Father calls us first and foremost to relationship with Himself.

Who Cares?

(continued from page 2)

will string and unstring his lute; only (ministers) neglect their instruments (their brains and spirits, I mean) which they daily use.

— Charles Spurgeon

Who cares? Well, there is a time to “look out for Number One!” We pastors had best be doing that for the sake of our people and for the reputation of the Gospel. And a care team of three can make a huge difference in helping us deal with ourselves in the face of our impossible calling. [†]

Dr. Moore, senior pastor of the St. James, Md., Brethren Church, serves as chair of the Leadership Care Study Group.

Pastoral care that works:



One pastor's story

By G. Emery Hurd

OVERALL I have been extremely happy in my current pastorate. Through joys, victories, difficulties, and challenges, I have always felt supported, appreciated, and understood. How have I managed to stay at Cheyenne for more than 16 years and to stay motivated, when the average pastorate lasts less than five years? A great measure of the credit goes to the work of our church's Pastoral Care Committee.

When I was called to serve the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church, I had already come to realize that traditional pastor-parish relations committees were ineffective in providing real pastoral care. So at Cheyenne, a Pastoral Care Committee was established instead.

This committee is directly answerable to our church's ministry council (what many churches call the official board). It consists of three members who serve staggered, three-year terms. Originally one member of the committee was selected by the congregation, one by the moderator, and one by me. Recently, however, the method of

to the one that the Leadership Care Study Group has recommended for all churches (*see the center section of this issue*). Strict confidentiality is expected on the part of the members of the committee.

This committee's purpose is to support the pastor and the pastoral family, and to advocate for the pastor and the pastor's family before the congregation. The committee is not to receive concerns about the pastor from members of the congregation, since scripture clearly says that people should go to each other directly. It is also not a pastoral selection committee, which we view as an entirely separate function.

A safe haven

This committee is a safe haven to which the pastor and the pastor's family can go for open and honest communication about their needs and concerns. It is also a group of people who take seriously their advocacy role for the pastor in the church, since there are so many issues that are inappropriate or uncomfortable for the pastor to discuss directly.

Issues that are frequently matters of significant conflict are addressed more easily through the Pastoral Care Committee. Instead of trying to talk about my own salary package and family needs at congregational meetings, for example, I am able to share my needs and concerns with the committee, which then advocates for me.

If my family or I feel there are

issues regarding a "double standard," we go to the committee. If the concerns are valid, the committee takes steps in the congregation or in the ministry council to rectify the situation. Sometimes the concerns are not valid, and then this same committee, after listening carefully and prayerfully, suggests things my family and I can say or do that will assist us. Decisions regarding the parsonage, my wife's role in the church, expectations of my daughters, my annual salary review, and other issues are made so much less stressful for both us and the congregation by

"Our family feels loved and appreciated by our church. That makes staying in ministry . . . and staying effective in that ministry, so much easier."



The purpose of the Pastoral Care Committee is to support the pastor and the pastoral family and to advocate for the pastor and the pastor's family before the congregation.

selection has been changed, so that now I recommend a member each year for a three-year term, with the congregation affirming my recommendations.

The committee has a very detailed ministry description, quite similar

to the existence of a Pastoral Care Committee that really cares about us and whose only responsibility is our care.

The greatest benefit

The greatest benefit of my Pastoral Care Committee, however, is the support that I receive in the day-to-day work within the church. The care and feeding of pastors (me included) is a difficult business. Pastors are trained and/or pressured to work long hours at the expense of family and health, never to complain, never to get angry, never to take a day off, never to take a vacation, never to . . . You get the idea.

The Pastoral Care Committee

makes sure I stay "human." The committee asks me regularly about my workload and, at times, has gone so far as to ask the congregation to "leave the pastor alone" on my day off. The committee makes sure that I do not over-commit myself and that I take my vacations.

Christmas in Ohio

Recently the Pastoral Care Committee learned that my wife strongly desired to spend Christmas with our families in Ohio. My children, aged 16 and 12, had never spent a Christmas with their grandparents. Even though Christmas is a very difficult time for a pastor to be away from a church, the Pastoral Care Committee arranged speakers, provided coordinators for the Christmas eve service, and took care of

hundreds of other details so that we could spend Christmas in Ohio.

The committee has also lovingly confronted me about my sleeping

The Pastoral Care Committee is a "safe haven" to which the pastor and the pastor's family can go for open and honest communication about their needs and concerns.

habits, about my need to delegate more, and about other things in my life that the committee saw were getting out of balance. It is wonderful to have such people in a church who are committed to helping me

stay healthy and in balance so that I can continue to minister effectively as husband, father, and pastor!

Loved and appreciated

Our family feels loved and appreciated by our church. That makes staying in ministry at Cheyenne, and staying effective in that ministry, so much easier. Wherever I am in ministry, there will always be a Pastoral Care Committee, because my family and I desperately need it, and so do the people I seek to serve. [✠]

Rev. Hurd, senior pastor of the Cheyenne, Wyo., Brethren Church, serves as chair of the Congregational Ministries Council of The Brethren Church.

Barriers to self-care

(continued from page 3)

(Luke 5:15, 9:10, 6:12; Mark 3:7; Matthew 14:22).

Jesus was in the unique position of knowing how limited His ministry time on earth was. He had the authority and power to cast out demons, multiply food for the hungry, heal the sick, and even raise the dead. And yet He gave Himself permission to dismiss the crowds and withdraw to solitude.

I am afraid that many Christian leaders would never have made it to the cross had they been in Jesus' shoes. They would have worked day and night, neglecting their diet, their sleep, and their relationship time with God, family, and friends.

Jesus gives us insight into how He was able to carry on His own ministry with such balance when He states in John 5:19, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing . . ." Jesus did not do every good thing He could have done. He joined the Father in the work He was doing, seeking His direction rather than responding to demands and expectations placed on Him by those He served. It would seem to me that self-care is not only okay with God, but is a pursuit He expects and blesses.

Is self-care okay with the church?

Maybe as a pastor you're convinced that self-care is okay with God, but you believe that you could never get it past your congregation. So the question is, "Is self-care okay with those you lead?"

Certainly some will be supportive; others will not be. Some will recognize that a balanced, healthy life for the pastor is essential for the well-being of the church. Others will not recognize that without personal care, their pastor will be unable to lead them at his or her full potential. The problem arises when we allow the dissension of a few to become the driving force behind the decisions we make.

Is self-care okay with pastors?

The final question becomes, "Is self-care okay with you, the pastor?" Do you believe that taking care of yourself physically, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually is a legitimate use of your time? Until you put yourself on the list of people you care for, believing that self-care is a necessity rather than a luxury, you will live your life from a reactive rather than a proactive stance.

Give yourself permission by looking to the example that Christ established for us during His time

of ministry on earth, when He, too, was confined to the limitations of a human body. Free yourself to follow Jesus' example and seek a balance between ministering to others and withdrawing for times of solitude and renewal.

The voice of our Father must be the one to which we respond, and the Father calls us first and foremost to relationship with Himself. Without intentional self-care, our vision blurs and our energy is depleted in simply getting by. And without a healthy, balanced life, our relationships suffer, both our relationship with God and with those He has called us to serve.

It is the heartfelt commitment of the Leadership Care Study Group to revolutionize the way Brethren leaders are cared for—by our denomination, by the local church, and by leaders themselves. Recognizing that our leaders are the experts in what is needed to bring about this change, we welcome and invite any input you might offer. It is our sincere desire and prayer that this edition of the EVANGELIST might be a positive beginning in bringing about this revolution. [✠]

Dr. Allison is Associate Professor of Pastoral Counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary and serves on the Leadership Care Study Group.



"It's not easy being a pastor"

By David Cooksey

WHEN MY CHILDREN were little, one of their favorite television programs was Sesame Street. We would often watch it together. Kermit the Frog was a lead character, and a song he sang that was one of our favorites was "It's not easy being green." I have often thought that this statement, with a slight change, is also true: "It's not easy being a pastor."

In 28 years of ministry, I have seen many changes take place in the church and in the role of the pastor. The church used to be the center of family life, and church activities were given priority. Today church activities have been replaced in most families by band, football, soccer, cheerleading, or other activities. Few communities still honor church night, and sports events are even scheduled for Sunday mornings! The church has been pushed to the margin of community life, with other things viewed as of equal or greater importance.

Pastors today receive less respect in the community than they used to receive. Even among church members one can find people who are critical of and who say hurtful things to or about the pastor.

Providing care for pastors is important in today's world, perhaps more important than it ever was in the past, because the demands on their time and talents are greater than in the past. Pastors carry the burdens and needs of their churches as well as those of their families and themselves. They are on call every day.

Usually what a church can expect of its pastor is not clearly understood by

everyone in the congregation. So each member has his or her own ideas of what the pastor is to do and how the pastor is to do it. As a result, the pressures on the time and activities of the pastor are immense.

Put yourself in your pastor's shoes

What might help us to understand how to care for the pastor is to place ourselves in the pastor's shoes. We need to remember that pastors are called to their work, that they love ministry, and that they love the people in their care. We also need to realize that pastors spend much time on sermon-preparation and are concerned about the balance between feeding the flock and reaching the lost. Bible studies, small-group sessions, youth meetings, and Sunday school classes take preparation time as well.

One way to care for pastors is to recognize that preparation time is necessary and should be viewed as an important part of their work.

Pastors want to present the Word of God in such a way that people in the congregation will learn how to live by the Word. They care about the people in their congregations, and they think about their needs and the problems they face in their everyday lives. All of this takes time.

Pastors also want to know the individuals and families in their congregations so they can serve them better. Think of ways to help your pastor get to know you, and find ways to involve your family and your pastor's family in fun activities together. Invite your pastor over for dinner or for coffee, so that you can get better acquainted. Pray for your pastor and for your pastor's family. Ask members of the pastor's family for specific things in their lives that they would want you to pray about.

Offer to accompany your pastor on visits occasionally. And share with your pastor names of family members and friends you are praying will come to faith in Christ or begin attending church. In other words, do things that will build a relationship between your pastor and you.

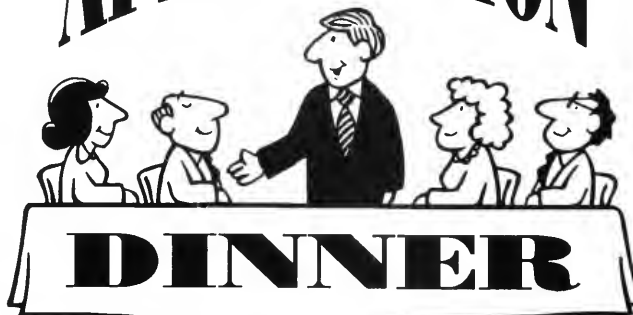
A church that cares for its pastor will encourage its pastor to spend time with family, take vacations, go to educational seminars, attend district and national conferences, and spend time in prayer and devotions. All these things will not only benefit the pastor, they will also be reflected in the kind of care the pastor gives

to the congregation. Take care of your pastor so that your pastor can take care of you.

October is pastor appreciation month. It is an opportunity for you and your church to show how much you care for your pastor. Have a celebration! Do something involving the whole church that expresses how much you appreciate the life and ministry of your pastor. Everyone likes to be appreciated, including your pastor! [✠]

Rev. Cooksey is Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church and a member of the Leadership Care Study Group.

APPRECIATION



"October is pastor appreciation month. . . . Have a celebration! Do something involving the whole church that expresses how much you appreciate the life and ministry of your pastor."

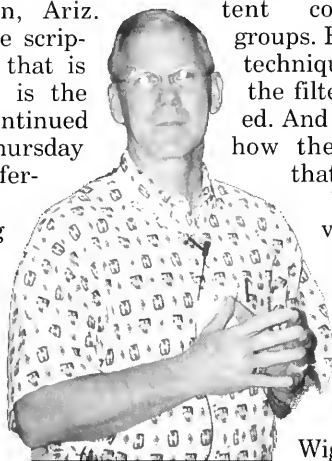
A Biblical Model for Church Growth

Report of a General Conference workshop
presented by Rev. Bill Wright

"**T**ODAY I want to talk to you about the fact that church growth is Jesus plus nothing," said Rev. Bill Wright, pastor of Northwest Community Church, a Brethren congregation in Tucson, Ariz. "There is a model in the scripture for church growth that is Jesus plus nothing. He is the model," Pastor Wright continued during a workshop on Thursday morning of General Conference.

"If the church is going to grow, we are going to become a reflection of the character and the person of Jesus Christ." "God's plan is a Person, and we need to be passionate about Him," Wright said. That Pastor Wright knows something about church growth is evidenced by the fact that in the 18 months he has been at Northwest Community Church, attendance has gone from 40 to around 230, with 60 percent of attendees being brand new believers.

Wright believes that techniques are involved in church growth, and later



Rev. Bill Wright

in the workshop he spoke about some of these—a sense of urgency, trained leadership, people versus program, pastoral availability, development of successors, sharing the load, consistent communication, small groups. But he said that all such techniques need to go through the filter of how Jesus operated. And in each case he showed how these techniques passed that test.

Wright has strong convictions about training other leaders to share in the ministry, and he had two of his "Timothies" with him to participate in the workshop.

The first was Gregg Wiggen, who is on staff part time at Northwest Church as coordinator of small-group ministry. Wiggen talked about strategic questions a church needs to ask in order to get Christ's vision and passion for His church. Among those questions: Is Jesus Christ the model that is revealed through every ministry in your church? Does your ministry have an

outward focus? Is the mission of your church the same as Jesus' mission? Are small-group ministries the major focus of your church?

The second "Timothy" was Randall Hartman, youth pastor at Northwest Church. He talked about ingredients for growth, noting again that each of these ingredients must be biblical—that is, run through the filter of Jesus Christ. He presented and briefly explained that Christ-centered growth is biblical, measurable, miraculous, conversion-focused, service-focused, world-focused, Spirit filled and bold, demanding, exciting and infectious, and inviting.

He gave two examples of the miraculous in his ministry with the youth at Northwest Church. First, last year he brought just one person from the youth group to the BYIC Convention; this year he brought 40. Second, of those 40, seven had accepted Jesus Christ just the night before. Hartman and others had felt burdened to pray for these seven by name while eating dinner, and a half hour later the seven were at the altar accepting the Lord.

This bore out what Pastor Wright had said earlier in the workshop: "We believe that God has been pleased to do some really supernatural things, and He's allowed us to be around while He's doing them!"

—reported by Richard Winfield, editor

Audio cassettes of this excellent workshop are available from The Brethren Church National Office for \$5.00 each

Historic meeting held during General Conference

AHISTORIC and exciting meeting was held during General Conference at Estes Park in August. It was a first meeting of Brethren mission-

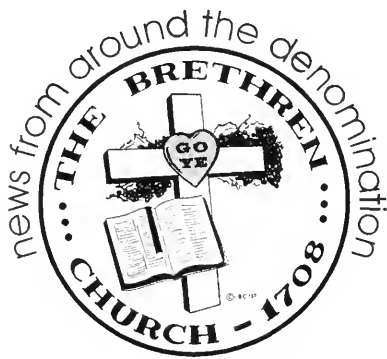
aries and leaders serving in various countries in Latin-American.

The meeting began with a time of prayer and scripture reading, followed

by a challenging message from Exodus 3:1-10 by Rev. Claudio Castelli, a Brethren missionary from Argentina serving in Paraguay. Meeting participants (see below) then shared
(continued on next page)



Participants in the Latin-American meeting were (l. to r.) José Rivero, president of The Brethren Church in Argentina; Pastor Juan & Amelia Arregin of the Hispanic Brethren Church in Tucson, Ariz.; Jen Thomas, missionary to Mexico; Miguel Antunez, missionary in Peru; Pastor Italo Abuid of the Hispanic Brethren Church in Sarasota, Fla.; Karina and Claudio Castelli, missionaries from Argentina serving in Paraguay; Todd Ruggles, missionary to Mexico; and (not shown) Eduardo Rodriguez, head of the South American Theological Seminary in Argentina.



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regional facts and needs, voiced their vision for the future, and expressed the challenge of working as a team in order to spread The Brethren Church in Latin American countries.

Eduardo Rodriguez presented the vision and goals of the South American Theological Seminary and explained the theological education by extension and intensive-course programs of the school. He said that the new seminary is already known not only in Argentina but also in Paraguay and Colombia. The group agreed that it is important that efforts be made to train people from every Latin American country at the seminary.

At the end of the meeting, the participants agreed to schedule a time to meet again every two or three years. They then concluded with singing and by spending time in prayer about the various matters they had discussed.

— reported by José O. Rivero

Big Day at Camp Bethany

Lakeville, Ohio — July 7, the final day of a great week of camp for 72 senior high youth, was a special day at Camp Bethany. On that afternoon five campers were baptized in the lake by Rev. Don Belsterling, Pastor of Youth Discipleship at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland.

It was also a day to celebrate the six years Tracy Whiteside directed the Ohio District camp program. Tracy and her husband Jeff are starting a new Brethren church in Delaware, Ohio, so Tracy has resigned her camp responsibilities. The youth dedicated the Friday evening program to Tracy and bid her farewell with hugs and tears.

Camp Bethany has grown during the 40 years it has served the Ohio District, and many young people have met the Lord there.

— reported by Betty Deardurff,
Gretna Brethren Church

Brethren use ingenious ways to raise money to help youth attend the BYIC Convention

A RECORD NUMBER of young people attended the Brethren Youth In Christ (BYIC) Convention held August 7–11 in Estes Park, Colorado. (Read the report of this exciting Convention on pages 14–16 of the September issue, if you have not already done so!)

Attending the Convention was an expensive proposition (both the cost of the Convention and the cost of getting there), and some pretty ingenious methods were used to raise the money. A couple of noteworthy ones are reported below.

Warsaw, Indiana

At the Warsaw, Ind., First Brethren Church, it was a contest to see who would lose his hair—Senior Pastor Bill Shipman or Vice-Moderator Jack Wolfe. Throughout the month of June, members of the congregation voted for which of these two they most wanted to see hairless. They voted with their pocketbooks—with change, dollars, checks, and credit-card payments all readily accepted. (Pastor Shipman notes that he voted often—for Moderator Wolfe). A chart was on display every Sunday showing who was in the lead, to encourage additional voting.

With some help from the moderator, the contest ended in a tie. So on July 15 both men lost their hair, with Deacon Chair Don Schue, a former barber, doing the honors.

“This was one of our largest and easiest fund-raisers that we did to help get our youth to Colorado,”

said Pastor Shipman, with approximately \$600 being raised. He suggests that it’s a method other churches might want to try sometime. (But what do you do if your pastor is bald?!)

Northern Indiana

In northern Indiana, it was a golf tournament that was used to raise funds for the youth. On a hot and breezy June 10, 79 golfers (most of them Brethren) from northern Indiana and northwestern Ohio competed against the weather, one another, and themselves for top honors.

But as intended, the true winners were the youth of the Indiana District. The event generated \$4,300 for the Youth-to-Estes Park Travel Fund, with each of the 119 district youth who attended the BYIC Convention receiving \$36.

The youth didn’t just benefit from the event—they were fully involved. They helped serve a lunch that preceded the tournament and also took charge of a putting tournament. To raise more money, they sold yards of string (a golfer could use a purchased “yard” to improve the position of his or her golf ball by three feet); and they also sold mulligans (another shot to replace a poor one without adding to one’s score). (As you can tell, this was not a regulation tournament!)

Many individuals and groups were involved in making this fund-raiser a success. Pastors Tim Garner and

(continued on right side of next page)



Before and after: Warsaw Vice-Moderator Jack Wolfe (at left in both pictures) and Warsaw Pastor Bill Shipman with (left) hair on their heads and (right) hair in their hands.

The Pastoral Care Committee in the Local Church

The following proposal from the Leadership Care Study Group of the Congregational Ministries Council is intended to help local churches in the process of providing more intentional care for the pastoral household. The following ideas are primarily suggestive. We present this model to encourage intentional pastoral care within congregations and consistency among congregations. Each local church is free to adapt this document to suit its particular situation. This document has been prepared in light of the growing need to encourage and strengthen pastoral households in local churches.

1. We recommend the creation of a Pastoral Care Committee in each local church. We further recommend that the Pastoral Care Committee replace the Pastoral Relations Committee. The Pastoral Care Committee bears no formal relation to what has been known as the Pastoral Relations Committee (or other similar terminology). Pastoral Relations Committees have traditionally been responsible to deal with the conflict issues between pastors and individuals within the congregation, as well as to present financial recommendations to the congregation or administrative board. We feel that such an arrangement could foster an unbiblical approach to conflict, violating the guidelines set forth in Matthew 18:15-17. The Pastoral Care Committee will not be directly involved in conflict resolution.

2. The Pastoral Care Committee exists to promote the care of the pastor and the pastor's family in the following areas: physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, relational, and financial.

3. The method of operation of the Pastoral Care Committee will be a relational rather than a business model. A business model is more formal and less personal in nature.

4. We recommend that the pastor select committee members with the affirmation of the congregation or administrative board. Representation from other boards, committees, ministries, etc., within the church is not necessary. Neither should

there be any *ex officio* members of the committee. The Study Group suggests a membership of three persons, each serving a three-year term on a rotating basis. The person with the longest tenure could be the chairperson. Since the committee is relational in nature, limiting tenures is unnecessary (i.e., an outgoing member could be re-appointed).

5. The Pastoral Care Committee may make reports and/or recommendations to the congregation or administrative board when necessary.

6. Guidelines for the Pastoral Care Committee to follow in exercising its role:

- a. Be an advocate for the pastor and family.
- b. Discuss with the pastor and mutually agree upon a policy of confidentiality with exceptions.
- c. Educate the congregation on sensitivity to pastoral/family needs.
- d. Practice creative encouragement.
- e. Communicate with district personnel at least quarterly to report activities and to use them as resource persons.
- f. Be prepared to invite a crisis-intervention team or a transition team to the church in the event of conflict, retirement, death, or other forms of departure of a pastor from the church. Conduct this process in cooperation with the appropriate district and national personnel.
- g. Plan for and expedite Pastor Appreciation Day (or month) each year. (Focus on the Family, 1-800-232-6459, has a Pastor Appreciation Kit available for a nominal fee.)
- h. Meet possibly monthly, or at least quarterly, or at the call of pastor or chairperson.
- i. Develop a separate Pastoral Care Committee for each staff person in a multiple pastoral staff situation.
- j. Use written materials available in a Pas-

toral Care Committee packet available from The Carpenter's Shop (419-289-0325). This packet currently includes the following titles (a brief synopsis of each appears at the end of this presentation):

McIntosh, Dr. Gary L. and Dr. Robert L. Edmondson. *It Only Hurts on Monday: Why Pastors Quit and What You Can Do About It*. Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998.

Rediger, C. Lloyd. *Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

Roberts, Wes. *Support Your Local Pastor: Practical Ways to Encourage Your Minister*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1995.

These books can be used as resource material in the following ways:

- Individual members read each volume in order to educate themselves on issues relating to pastoral care.
- Use a volume as a basis of discussion during committee time. Chairperson could lead discussion or leadership could be rotated.
- Pastor read and bring relevant issues to the committee.

Book Synopses

It Only Hurts on Monday by Dr. Gary L. McIntosh and Dr. Robert L. Edmondson. This is a book about pastoral pressures and expectations which have been significant in the lives of over 60 ex-pastors and their churches. It is a research-based book which draws frequently upon the survey results which preceded it. It is especially helpful to Pastoral Care Committees because each chapter, after discussing the particular problem, contains a "You Can Help!" section with practical suggestions to deal with the problem in question. The book is down-to-earth and quite useable.

Clergy Killers by G. Lloyd Rediger. This book is the most clinical of the three, relying heavily upon the discipline of psychology for its insights. And it packs a hard punch, even if one does not find the familiar evangelical-church clichés and Bible quotations one

might expect. The process of identifying clergy killers is scrupulously guided, lest one should be guilty of false accusation. Not every troublemaker or negative person in the church is a clergy killer! But clergy killers are real and must be dealt with in stern ways (something most congregations scrupulously avoid!). Rediger repeatedly insists that clergy killers must be rendered inoperable in local churches.

This is not an easy book to digest because it deals with analysis and strategies, but it issues a mandate to churches to come to terms with phenomena which debilitate pastors and congregations. The final three chapters provide a welcome relief because they discuss positive factors in the life and health of pastors and congregations. But the preceding chapters are imperative because of the problem issues in many churches. There is a chapter on Killer Clergy as well, lest one think that the problem is strictly one-sided. A Pastoral Care Committee will have plenty to discuss if this book becomes a basis of discussion!

Support Your Local Pastor by Wes Roberts. Wes Roberts' ministry is to Christian leaders and his book reveals his familiarity with the issues. The introductory chapter, "Loving Our Pastors Well," is the objective of the Leadership Care Study Group. The concluding chapter, "Who Can Help Us Care for Our Pastors?" provides the names, addresses, and phone numbers of forty-one ministry agencies devoted to caring for pastors and their families. Between these chapters lie other chapters filled with practical suggestions and ideas for a Pastoral Care Committee to implement. This is the most suggestion-laden book of the three and will prove valuable in helping to encourage the pastor and his family.

All of the above-recommended books seek to help create pastor-congregation relationships which will make pastoring that particular local church an exciting and fulfilling adventure. We are trying to create an atmosphere in The Brethren Church which communicates that pastoring is a wonderful calling and that our churches are wonderful places to pastor. We are hoping the Brethren will become a model of pastoral care so that others might emulate us in the care for their pastors.

The Congregational Ministries Council
Emery Hurd, Chairman

The Leadership Care Study Group
Brian H. Moore, Chairman

Ashland Theological Seminary breaks ground for \$2.75 million Sandberg Leadership Center

Ashland, Ohio — Ashland Theological Seminary broke ground on Friday, September 8, for a new leadership center to be constructed on the seminary campus. The new building will be called the Sandberg Leadership Center in recognition of a generous commitment toward the building by Dr. Emanuel (Buzz) and Mrs. Ann Sandberg.

The 16,000-square-foot leadership center will serve as a conference center, with seminar rooms, auditorium, conference facilities, breakout rooms, areas for reflection and prayer, and faculty offices. It will also house a counseling center with state-of-the art technology and featuring laboratory and clinical experience areas. Cost of the center is an estimated \$2.75 million.

Dr. Frederick Finks, president of the seminary, said, "This new Leadership Center will position the seminary to expand its growing areas of expertise and at the same time expand its specialized programs to meet the growing needs of society." Ashland Theological Seminary is

currently the largest seminary in Ohio and the 12th largest in the U.S. and Canada. The student body of 800 students represents more than 70 denominations and parachurch organizations from almost every state in the United States and 16 foreign countries. [†]



Because the "ground" being broken was parking-lot blacktop, the first shovelful was taken with a backhoe (top), with Dr. Buzz Sandberg at the controls. This was followed by a more conventional ground-breaking (above) by some of the principal donors to the building—(l. to r.) Mrs. Nancy Peterson, Lois and Ken Miller, Mrs.



Frances Smetzer (with son Ted and daughter Nancy), and Buzz and Ann Sandberg. At left, the Sandbergs stand beside an artist's conception of what the leadership center will look like when it is completed.



(continued from page 8)

Tim DeLaughter co-chaired the event. The Jefferson and Nappanee churches provided the main course for the lunch, Elkhart provided the vegetable/salads, Goshen the desserts, and North Manchester the pop. Major sponsors of the tournament, giving a \$500 contribution or more, were Child Support Recovery Services, Inc., of Elkhart; R-Way Trailer of Elkhart; and Starcraft Recreation Vehicles of Topeka.

Hole Sponsors and cost underwriters giving \$100 to \$300 included Ray and Janis Yoder of the Jefferson Brethren Church; Patty Sweet of the College Corner Brethren Church; Mennonite Mutual Aid Association of Goshen; Kropf Recreational Vehicles of Goshen; Premiere Sign of Goshen; Shepherd's Chevy-Olds of N. Manchester; First State Bank of Middlebury; and Reliance Insurance (Jeff Blue) of Goshen (the hole-in-one sponsor). (One of the disappointments of the day was that no one "aced" the 17th hole, which had a \$15,000 insurance policy riding on it. The person who got the hole-in-one would have split the prize with the youth!)

Others who donated prizes were Indiana Lawrence Bank of N. Manchester; Sprint long-distance; and T-Time Golf (Gene Lockhart) of Bryan, Ohio.

Winners of the tournament were as follows:

- Low individual score — Gary Goshert with a 31.
- Winning team, determined by adding the team's best ball on the front nine with their scramble score on the back nine — Jason Blackman, Drew Smith, Stuart Smith, and Brian Smith (Wabash).
- Longest drive — Stuart Smith
- Longest putt — Amanda Brunner
- Closest to the pin — Art Frederickson

— reported by Rev. Tim Garner



Scott Meadows installed at Flora First Brethren

Flora, Ind. — Rev. R. Scott Meadows was installed June 4 as pastor of the Flora, Ind., First Brethren Church.



Rev. David Cooksey, Director of Pastoral Ministries for The Brethren Church, conducted the installation service. Others participating

in the service included Joe Collins, chair of the Pulpit Committee, and Deacon Donnie Clingenpeel.

Rev. Meadows became serving the Flora Church on March 8, 1998. He has a B.S. degree in Bible and Christian counseling from Kentucky Christian College and is pursuing a Master's degree from Southwest Theological Seminary. He serves as president of the Flora Ministerial Association and is chaplain for the Flora Police Department.

Rev. Meadows is married, and he and his wife Allison have a son, Blake. "We feel very blessed to have Scott and his family serving at the Flora First Brethren Church," said reporter Pat Calhoun. [✚]

New pastor at Bethlehem

Harrisonburg, Va. — Dr. Thomas Smith began serving the Bethlehem Brethren Church of Harrisonburg, Va., on June 1. A graduate of Ashland Theological Seminary with both Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees, Dr. Smith has served as pastor of churches in Ohio and Indiana, most recently at the Muncie, Ind., First Brethren Church. [✚]



Bicycles for India

Twelve Mile, Ind. — In April, the missions committee of the Corinth Brethren Church decided to support the mission work of the Kumars in India by raising money to purchase bicycles for the pastors serving there. When this was announced, Pastor Paul Reeder made the off-hand comment that if the congregation raised enough money for 30 bicycles, he *might* ride a bicycle down the aisle of the church.

The congregation rose to the occasion and funds began to pour in. Each week progress was reported by placing a bicycle rider on a map of India (*above right*). Before long space was running out on the map! By mid-April the Corinth Brethren had contributed \$2,150, enough to purchase 43 bicycles.

Pastor Reeder, being a good sport, agreed to ride a bicycle, but outside on the sidewalk. So on Sunday, April 30, following the worship service, he jumped on a 3-wheeled "bicycle" (*at right*), donned a flowered Easter bonnet, and rode down the front sidewalk—to the great applause of the Corinth Brethren.

— reported by Marty Arthur



Logans serving in Somalia: At General Conference, Brethren missionaries Mark and Chantal Logan (*at right in the photo below*) announced that they would return to Africa in September (*they returned Sept. 23rd*) to do mission work among the people of Somalia. Because of the ten-year civil war in Somalia and the resulting strife and anarchy in that country, they will live in Nairobi, Kenya, but will make trips into Somalia from time to time. The Logans are working in Africa under two mission agencies, Eastern Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Central Committee, and they serve as the Somalia representatives for both of these agencies. They request

prayers for their safety as they work among the Somali people, for the situation in that country is always volatile.

Following their earlier service in Djibouti Africa, the Logans

spent the past year in France (Chantal's homeland), where Chantal did course work for a Ph.D. degree and Mark served as associate pastor of a Reformed Church in Rouen, France. The senior pastor of the church where Mark served is Gilles Boucomont. The Logans first met Gilles and his wife Aude (*at left in the photo above*) in Djibouti, where they became good friends. In fact, Mark baptized Aude in the Gulf of Tadjoura (where the Indian Ocean meets the Red Sea) during that time. After spending a year with the Boucomonts in France, the Logans invited them to accompany them to the U.S. and to attend General Conference. Both Gilles and Aude are fluent in English and were able to enjoy the Conference.



Volunteer work groups make major impact at Riverside Christian School this past summer

VERY HOT WEATHER, delays in supplies, downpours of rain . . . nothing seemed to daunt the spirits of the four work groups that came to Riverside Christian School this past summer. Each group came with caring hearts, servant spirits, and helping hands. Each group also came determined to fill the hours meeting any and every need it could. A tremendous amount of work was accomplished.

The first group of 15 people came from the Loree Brethren Church of Bunker Hill, Ind., and the Trinity Brethren Church of North Canton, Ohio. Just after their arrival a crisis occurred when the school's walk-in freezer stopped working! They joined the rescue party.

In the space of about 2½ days this group accomplished a great deal, including building a deck for a staff mobile unit; helping with vacation Bible school music, crafts, and games; planting flowers; and painting the school locker rooms and equipment storage area.

This group (not above a bit of mischief) included two pastors—Rev. Eugene Oburn and Rev. Tony Price—and the following lay people: DeAnn Oburn, Geneva Price, Bert West, Cindy and Alex Lorenz, Dan Garber, Carl Lowe, Donna and David Barnes, Joshua Barnes, Martha Garber, Irene Clapper, and Derek Holland.

Realizing they were coming at an extra busy and very tiring time, the next group of people—from the Corinth (Twelve Mile, Ind.) Brethren Church—came anyway. This group of 18, having barely caught their breath from a canoeing excursion, launched into several projects—painting three classrooms, doing electrical and plumbing work, repairing some roofing, and removing old gutters. The next day most of the group's time and energy was focused on helping prepare two softball fields, food, posters, etc., for the annual July 4th holiday/homecoming celebration.

The group also helped in a number of ways with the celebration, even with clean-up when it was almost dark. But there's more! Several members provided some great special music in the evenings and during worship on Sunday.

This group included Jay and Betty Shafer, Duane Scott, Tai Staller, Dustin and Chasity Dillman, Michelle McKinley, Brad Moon, Trista Peters, Larkin and Norma Jean Beecher, Marvin and Harriet Dillman, Dean Gallahan, and Dana, Jill, Silas, and Erica Zartman.

The third group, another combined one, had a number of familiar faces, as most of them had been to the school many times before, helping in numerous ways. They represented the Roann, Ind., First Brethren Church and the Peru, Ind., First Brethren Church.

Working on hot pavement in the hot sun, this group almost welcomed the downpours—of rain, that is, not of sweat. A major and vital project accomplished this week was widening two sidewalk areas while improving drainage.

This group also brought books, washed two staff trailers, painted classrooms, constructed some needed shelving, transported and set up a storage building, constructed a porch railing, and widened a driveway. Amazing!



This group (not above a bit of teasing) included Greg and Terri Caughell, Keith and Marilyn Dyson, Steve Meyer, Leslie and Chris Moellering, Janie and Daryl Prather, Lorie and Adam Keck, Paula and Mike Mooney, and a number of little ones.

The last and smallest group came from the Bryan, Ohio, First Brethren Church. Smaller in number but just as big in heart, this group tackled big projects and accomplished much in

At right, workers from Roann and Peru repair and widen sidewalks; below, Brethren from Corinth paint a room; bottom, two workmen remove old gutters—just a sample of "the tremendous amount of work [that] was accomplished."



three days. Half of the group worked at badly-needed renovation of staff housing for new staff coming in. This was a key task. The other half of this group painted a restroom, the front hallway, and the front porch area and doors. This is what everyone sees first, and it looks great!

This group included Denny and Kristiana Dietrich, Tim and Nicole Manning, Carmen and Ann Cummins, Mandi and Max Smith, Josh McCann, and Justin Schultz.

What a busy summer this was at Riverside! And surely this article doesn't tell the whole story. Other things were done that missed the list. Plus each group took care of its own meals, often including Riverside staff for the fellowship. Each group also helped cover the cost of supplies it used. Each group was a special blessing, and (Praise the Lord!) each group promised to come back. [✕]

— Nancy Hostettler





Bradenton church honors musician Martha Ader

Bradenton, Fla. — Martha Ader, Director of Music and organist for the Bradenton Brethren Church, was honored recently with a carry-in dinner and a shower of cards in recognition of her 60 years of service as a church musician. At the close of the dinner, Mrs. Sarah Garrett, the pastor's



Martha Ader with husband Glenn.

wife, gave Martha a bouquet of 60 mixed blossoms; Moderator Enos Schrock gave her a plaque expressing thanks for her 60 years of serving the Lord; and Pastor Buck Garrett gave her 60 new golden dollars.

Martha began her service at age 13 playing piano at the First Brethren Church of Mansfield, Ohio. Later an organ replaced the piano, and Martha became organist. Still later the church relocated and became the Walcrest Brethren Church, but Martha's role didn't change. She continued there as organist until 1985, at which time the Ader family moved to Bradenton.

Martha has continued to use her special talents to serve the Bradenton Church. And the congregation looks forward to her continued ministry as she helps the church fulfill its motto of being a "Love and Care Center."

Martha has been married for 53 years to Glenn Ader, also a musician (saxophone, trombone, harmonica, and saw). Their two children also have musical talents. Son Ron plays electric bass, and daughter Bonnie plays piano. Martha, Glenn, and Bonnie occasionally play and sing together during the worship service. [U]

Ordination Services

Lorie Keck

Peru, Ind. — Lorie Keck was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Kathy was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held June 25 at the Peru First Brethren Church, where Rev. Keck serves as pastor.

Rev. L. Eugene Oburn, pastor of the Loree Brethren Church, gave the message for the service. Other Brethren elders participating in the service were

Rev. Claude Stogsdill, Rev. Jim Thomas, Rev. David Cooksey, Rev. Russell Gordon, Rev. Gene Eckerley, and Rev. Lorie Keck himself, who gave the benediction.

Special music was presented by Amie, Adam, and Andrew Keck, Lorie and Kathy's children. Susie Stout was organist for the service, and Claire Balsbaugh played the piano. Peru First Brethren Moderator Brooke Balsbaugh read the church's call for the ordination of Pastor Keck.

Lorie Keck was born (June 5, 1951) and raised in Teegarden, Ind., and attended the Teegarden First Brethren Church, where he gave his life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Later, at Camp Shishewana, the Lord called him to become a pastor. In June 1974 he married Kathryn Irene Stoneburner, also a member of the Teegarden Church.

Upon graduation from Indiana University in South Bend, Lorie taught elementary school in Lapaz, Ind., for three years. After a succession of blue-collar jobs, he and Kathy answered

the Lord's call to teach and minister at Riverside Christian School in Lost Creek, Ky. While teaching at Riverside, he also served the Haddix and Rowdy Brethren Churches as well as the Clayhole Grace Brethren Church. He also found time to earn

an MFA degree from Morehead (Ky.) State University. After serving the Lord at Riverside for 19 years, Pastor Keck received a call to pastor the First Brethren Church of Peru, where he has served for the past two years.



Rev. and Mrs. Lorie Keck

As noted above, the Kecks have three children. Amie, an athletic trainer, resides in St. Charles, Ill.; Adam is studying avionics in Tulsa, Okla.; and Andrew is a junior at Huntington (Ind.) College. All three have given their hearts to Jesus and have made Him Lord of their lives.

Jim Corbitt

Mathias, W. Va. — Jim Cole Corbitt was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Laurice was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held July 11, 1999, at the Mathias, W. Va., Brethren Church, (continued at far right on next page)



Rev. Mike Woods (c.) talks to Jim and Laurice Corbitt about their responsibilities as an elder and the wife of an elder.

Warsaw First Brethren Church commissions Cheryl Ennis as Pastor of Nurture & Outreach

Warsaw, Ind. — Cheryl A. Ennis was commissioned on Sunday, June 4, as Pastor of Nurture and Outreach for the Warsaw First Brethren Church. Rev. Reilly Smith, Director of Missionary Ministries for The Brethren Church, brought the message for the service and also assisted Warsaw's Senior Pastor William J. Shipman with the commissioning service.



Pastor Cheryl Ennis with Warsaw Senior Pastor Bill Shipman (l.) and Rev. Reilly Smith.

Pastor Ennis is, in her own words, "a nearly 50-year-old widowed grandmother." She works full time as an Account Coordinator at Office Interiors, Inc., in South Bend, Ind. She became a

Christian when she was 17 and became part of the Ardmore First Brethren Church in the early seventies. She served the Ardmore con-

gregation as Sunday school teacher, music leader in the worship service, and as chair of the Outreach Ministry. She also held district and denominational positions.

Several years ago, while her husband was still living, Cheryl heard God's call to ministry. She thought it was God's plan for her to work in her local church, but after the death of her husband she began to explore other possibilities.

In time this led to discussions with Pastor Shipman about working with him at the Warsaw Church. So in September 1999 she began serving the Warsaw Church as a tent-maker on a temporary basis, with an evaluation to be made after one quarter. She has been at Warsaw ever since, and in April the members of the Warsaw Church voted unanimously to call her to serve the congregation as lay Pastor of Nurture and Outreach. [†]

Special Anniversaries

Two Brethren pastoral couples celebrated major anniversaries in September.

Wayne and Mildred Swihart

Rev. Wayne and Mildred Swihart marked their **60th** anniversary on September 14. Several events were held in their honor dur-



ing the month of September at the Honeywell Center in Wabash, Ind.

Together Wayne and Mildred accumulated 75 years as teachers. Both retired in 1986, Wayne from Valparaiso University and Mildred from Valparaiso Community Schools. They also served The Brethren Church for 50 years with pastorates at Burlington, Mexico, Tiosa, Muncie, Milford, and Mishawaka, Ind. Rev. Swihart retired from pastoral ministry in 1986 after 18 years at the Mishawaka Brethren Church.

The Swiharts are the parents of 4 children, have 11 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren. They reside at 302 Colonial Lane, N. Manchester, IN 46962.

Bill and Gene Skeldon

On September 15, **Rev. Bill and Gene Skeldon** were married **50 years**. But they began their celebration on July 10—with a five-week trip west that covered 7,600 miles, 18 states, 6 national parks, and included five days at General Conference in Estes Park.

Their celebration culminated on September 3 with a reception at the



Oak Hill, W. Va., First Brethren Church, where Rev. Skeldon has been pastor for the past 26 years. The reception was given by their sons Mark and John and was attended by family members from six states and Canada and by many friends from the church and community.



Faith is that which, knowing the Lord's will, goes and does it; or not knowing it, stands and waits.

— George Macdonald

Jim Corbitt Ordination

(continued from page 12)

where Rev. Corbitt serves as pastor. Brethren elders officiating at the service were Mike Woods, Dave Benshoff, and Pat Velanzon.

Rev. Corbitt has served the Mathias Church since the fall of 1995. He completed seminary at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., and took the additional Brethren emphasis courses required for ordination by the National Ordination Council of The Brethren Church.

Pastor Jim and Laurice are parents of three children—Cole, Amber, and Karen. They also have a granddaughter, Lily Amber.

— reported by Jane Robinson



In Memory

Rev. Fredrick T. Snyder, 79, a retired Brethren pastor, died July 22 at Harborside Health Care in



Sarasota, Fla. He was born May 26, 1921, in Wabash, Ind. On July 18, 1944, he married Betty Lou Denman, who survives him. He

served in the Navy during World War II and was a survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Brother Snyder was licensed for Brethren pastoral ministry in 1961 and ordained in 1969. He pastored the Marion, Mexico, Wabash, and Corinth Brethren Churches in Indiana. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Brethren Retreat Center and for several years on the Board of Directors of the Brethren's Home in Flora, Ind.

The Snyders were parents of three children—a son, Thomas, of Wabash; a daughter, Beverly (Fogel) of Marion; and a daughter, Barbara, who is deceased.

Services for Rev. Snyder were held at the Grandstaff-Hentgen funeral home in Wabash, with Rev. Glenn Grumblin and Rev. Gerald Zook officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the Wabash First Brethren Church. [†]

Correction

The name of the new pastor of the West Alexandria, Ohio, First Brethren Church was given incorrectly in the July/August issue of the *EVANGELIST* (back page). The new pastor's name is Frank *Crotinger* (not Protinger). Incorrect information was sent to the editor.



Meadow Crest Brethren Church of Fort Wayne, Ind., recently completed and dedicated a new church sign—made from a single piece of Tennessee limestone weighing 4,800 pounds! Church moderator Judd Chaille and his wife Christina drove to the Tennessee Stone Company in Crossville, Tenn., and picked out the stone. When the quarry operator heard it was for an Indiana church, he sold it to them for \$187. The stone was brought to Fort Wayne, where lettering and a cross and dove were sandblasted into the stone by artisans at Berkmeier Monument Company (at a cost of \$900, the single largest expense of the project). The rest of the project—moving and placing the stone, landscaping, and lighting, was done by the men of the congregation, with help from the church's good neighbor, Don Stanton, who provided his heavy equipment. The entire project, including landscaping and lighting, cost less than \$2,400. "We appreciate that God has blessed us with talented people to complete work like this," said Pastor Richard Austin.

Reformation Highlights Tour

Ashland, Ohio — Luke Keefer and Dale Stoffer, professors at Ashland Theological Seminary, will co-host a Reformation Highlights Tour next summer (2001). The tour will visit sites in Switzerland, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Holland that are significant for the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist phases of the Reformation. Time will also be spent in Schwarzenau, Germany, the birthplace of the Brethren movement.

Participating in the tour will be members of the Christian history, theology and philosophy department of Ashland Theological Seminary, who will serve as resource leaders to share their historical and theological insights at the sites visited. This tour offers a unique opportunity to visit some of Europe's most beautiful and historically rich locations and to become acquainted with their deep religious significance.

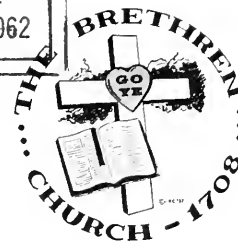
The tour will depart from Cleveland, Ohio, on June 23, 2001, and return on July 7. To receive a brochure providing all the essential details for the tour, contact Dale Stoffer by e-mail at dstoffer@ashland.edu or by phone at 419-289-5985 (office) or 419-281-6291 (home). [†]

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The Brethren Evangelist

Vol.122, No. 10

A newsletter for Brethren people

November 2000

A Thanksgiving Medley



The Pilgrim Fathers

O God, beneath Thy guiding hand
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;
And when they trod the wintry strand,
With prayer and psalm they worshipped
Thee.

Thou heard'st, well pleased, the song, the
prayer:

Thy blessing came; and still its power
Shall onward through all ages bear
The memory of that holy hour.

Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God
Came with those exiles o'er the waves;
And where their pilgrim feet have trod,
The God they trusted guards their graves.

And here Thy name, O, God of love,
Their children's children shall adore,
Till these eternal hills remove,
And spring adorns the earth no more.

Leonard Bacon, 1802-1881

Thankful hearts

With thankful hearts,
O Lord, we come,
To praise Thy name
in grateful song;
Accept the offering,
Lord, we bring,
And help us loud
Thy praises sing.

We thank Thee, Lord,
for daily food,
For plenteous store
of earthly good;
For life, and health,
we still possess,
With house and home
so richly blest.

We thank Thee for
this goodly land,
Where freedom reigns
on every hand;
Do Thou, O Lord,
our country bless,
With heavenly peace
and righteousness.

We thank Thee for
Thy blessed Word,
That to our souls
doth life afford;
Help us its message
to receive,
And from the heart
its truth believe.

— J.S. Mohler

Hymn of Gratitude

Great God of Nations, now to Thee,
Our hymn of Gratitude we raise;
With humble heart and bending knee
We offer Thee our song of praise.

Thy name we bless, Almighty God,
For all the kindness Thou hast shown
To this fair land the Pilgrims trod—
This land we fondly call our own.

We praise Thee that the Gospel's light
Through all our land its radiance
sheds
Dispels the shade of error's night,
And heavenly blessings round us
spreads.

Great God, preserve us in Thy fear;
In danger, still our Guardian be;
O spread Thy truth's bright precepts
here;
Let all the people worship Thee.

— Anonymous



Inside this issue

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The Women's Outlook Newsletter
is in the center of this issue.

Give thanks
to the LORD,
for he is good;
his love endures
forever.

— Psalm 107:1

To be grateful is to recognize the love of God in everything He has given us—and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love. Every moment of existence is a gift of grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God.

— Thomas Merton

Rock Springs: a different church experience

By Jill Wyckoff

I REMEMBER the day I got the oversized postcard in the mail. We had been church-hopping for years and hadn't found one that fit. Rock Springs (a new Brethren church being planted in southern California) promised a "different church experience," and, based on the uniqueness of the card, I figured that just might be the case.

Rock Springs was a hit, and within the first year I was thrilled to see my two teenage daughters come to Christ. A couple of months ago (to my complete amazement), my Star Wars-worshiping husband, Brae, turned from the "dark side" and accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

But God wasn't finished with my family yet. A few weeks later my 19-year-old son made his decision to

follow the Lord. My family is completely transformed. Our friends and family have noticed the change and are starting to come to church as well.

When I think about the day we first walked into Rock Springs, I never could have imagined the incredible impact it would have on our lives. Even two years later we continue to see life-altering changes and the abundance of God's blessings. During a recent beach baptism, 6 of the 12 people baptized were either family, friends or co-workers of ours. This included my father-in-law, who made his decision right there on the beach!

God had a wonderful plan in mind

when He led us to Rock Springs. He has surrounded us with a loving family, our new brothers and sisters in Christ. He is using us to help further the church's mission. He even provided a new job for me at the very company that created the postcard that led us to Rock Springs in the first place.

I believe that God worked through Pastor Jim and Stephanie Boyd, Youth Pastor Jamie Ziles, and the



Left to right, Brittany, Michelle, Jill, Brae, and Tommy Wyckoff.



A wave (right) makes certain that Brae Wyckoff (above, 2nd from r.) and his father, Ron Wyckoff, get dunked during their baptism by Rock Springs Pastor Jim Boyd (r.) and Youth Pastor Jamie Ziles.



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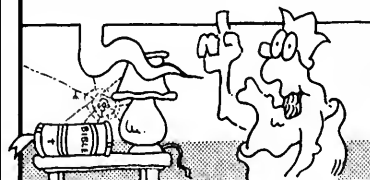
Pontius' Puddle

What about you, did you read your Bible today? Nov. 19-26 is National Bible Week, a good time to begin reading it daily.

MODERN CHRISTIANS HAVE A LOT FOR WHICH TO BE GRATEFUL. OUR MEDIEVAL FOREBEARS SUFFERED AND DIED FOR OUR RIGHT TO READ THE BIBLE. THE INVENTION OF MOVABLE TYPE GAVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THE BIBLE. AND MODERN EDUCATION HAS GIVEN US THE ABILITY TO READ THE BIBLE.



THEREFORE, SHOULD WE EVER GET AROUND TO READING IT, WE CAN JUST DUST OFF OUR COPY AND DO SO!



© Joel Kaufmann

Taking a stand

By Emanuel Sandberg

WE ARE ALL products of our culture. For example, those of us born before World War II tend to believe that social values are absolute and that there are such things as "right" and "wrong." In fact, that was the prevailing opinion in this country from its founding until social values became relative with the advent of the "post-modern" age.

At this time in our history it is not politically correct or socially popular to insist that there are absolute standards of conduct. We are expected to live peacefully in a society characterized by a "live-and-let-live" attitude, tolerant of belief and behavior different from our own and contrary to the teaching of our Lord.

Speaking only for myself, I feel as though I have fallen into that social trap myself. I know there are such things as "right" and "wrong"! The fact that I have not always publicly declared "evil" to be "evil" distresses me. I have asked God to forgive me, and now I ask you, my brothers and sisters in the Lord, to do the same thing.

It weighs heavily on my conscience that I have not regu-

larly spoken out against personal behavior that our Lord has declared sinful. By what stretch of our imagination can we call the killing of an unborn child (and even more so, a partially-born baby) a "choice" rather than what it is—murder? How can we, even though God called homosexuality an abomination, consider—and even support—same-sex marriages?

Values under attack

In our society the "gay" activists and homosexual lobbyists have generated political support for special privileges for homosexuals—and have successfully attacked any organization that dares to uphold the sanctity of "man and wife" marriage or the traditional social values on which our country was founded.

How far will the gay activists go? Consider this: Recently the U.S. Supreme Court decided, in a landmark decision, that the Boy Scouts were not required to utilize homosexuals as Boy Scout leaders. I dare say that to most people that decision seemed reasonable and appropriate, given the kind of contact Boy Scout leaders have with the scouts under their control.

The gay activists, unable to win their case in the Supreme Court, have apparently adopted a new tactic: pressuring local United Way chapters to withhold contributions from local Boy Scouts organizations. Recent-

ly, the United Way of Southeastern New England pulled more than \$70,000 in funding from the Narragansett (R.I.) Boy Scout Council because of the Scouts' policy on homosexuals.

This action is spreading. Focus on the Family reports that according to the United Way of America national office, this is the eighth United Way chapter to pull funding from the Boy Scouts. (Other United Way regional offices that have done so include San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Capitola, California; New Haven, Connecticut; Portland, Maine; Somerville, New Jersey; and Santa Fe, New Mexico.)

Tolerance of sinful behavior has undermined our culture, and—step-by-step—is destroying the foundation of society which has made our country great. I apologize to you for my silence in

the face of this national disaster. *God calls us to love the sinner, but to reject the sin—calling it by its true name!*

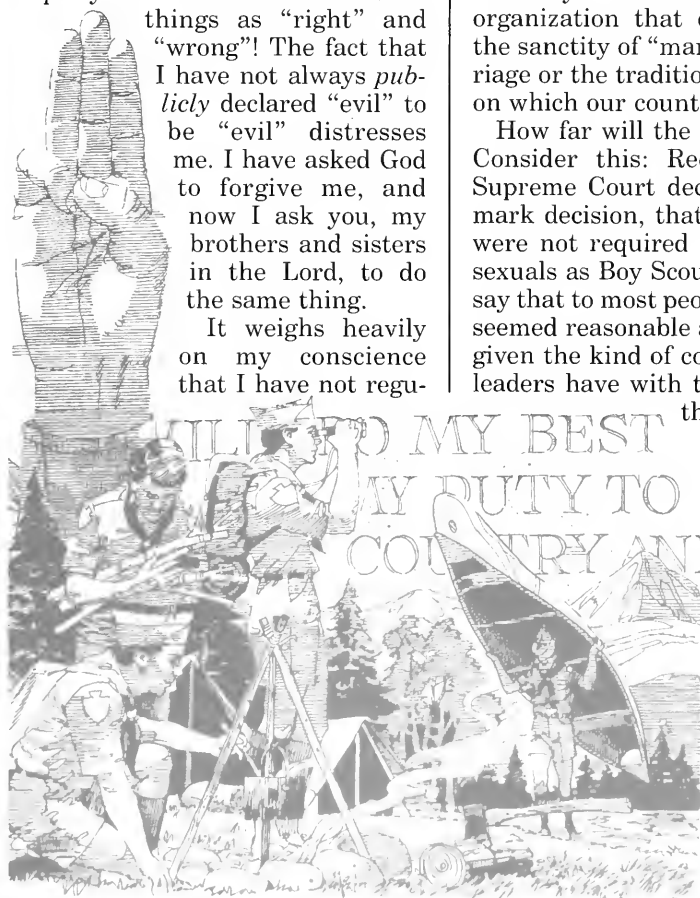
I pray that the Brethren will take a moral-based stand on these social issues. Society has a right to expect Christians to be heard. Our children have a right to expect us to live as we have been taught—and as we have taught them. Pastors, be courageous leaders, teaching and modeling a Christian lifestyle.

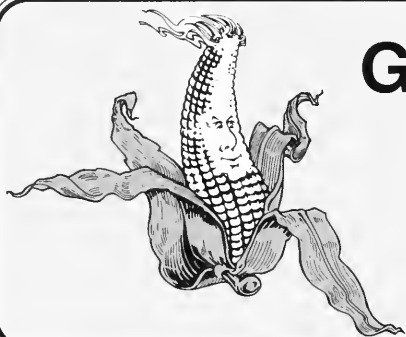
God has greatly blessed America, but I sense that His disappointment with this country and the social system we have developed is enormous. I believe there is still time for us to change our ways and to save our country. But such a transformation is not easy. It is "easier" to do and to say nothing.

If you have chosen to play the "easy" role, then you are, in one sense, a victim of our society's decline. Yet, in a fundamental way, you are also responsible for the decay of our culture and for the eventual destruction of our nation under God! I pray that you will not take the "easy" way, but that you will be a courageous Christian! [✠]



Dr. Buzz Sandberg
is Executive Director
for The Brethren Church.





Going to Seed for God

By Larry R. Baker

GOOD HARVESTS require good seed planted at the proper time in prepared soil and pampered as much as possible. If seed isn't put into the ground, the chances of a good harvest are pretty slim. As a friend from Tucson used to say, "Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, if your parents didn't have any children, chances are you won't either!"

Harvest is not possible without planting that occurred many months earlier. Someone had to put forth significant effort to prepare the soil, get the seed, plant it at the proper time, and take care of the young plants in a way that would produce a good harvest. Paul understood this principle when he said: "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously" (2 Cor. 9:6, *NIV*).

We sometimes hear complaints in the church that not enough people are coming to Jesus. We forget that the spiritual harvest works on principles similar to the ones that govern the harvests that fill our grocery shelves. One major problem is that Christians aren't planting enough seed to get a good harvest. So it's time to ask, "Are we going to seed for God?" Let me explain what I mean.

Receptive people

There have always been receptive people who want to come to Jesus. It began with the shepherds in Bethlehem (Lk. 2:8-20) and the Magi who stopped by Herod's palace seeking the Messiah (Matt. 2:1-2). During Jesus' ministry there were many diverse examples of receptive people who were eager to learn more about Jesus: the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:8-10), the Canaanite woman (Matt. 15:21-28), the rev-

enue agent Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-6), and some Greeks who were worshipping in Jerusalem (Jn. 12:20-22).

There are still receptive people today who want to hear about the difference Jesus has made in your life and how He can make a difference in theirs. Some of these people are in your family, where you work or go to school, and in your neighborhood. God wants us to begin our seed-planting with these people.

Attuned people

In Jesus' circle of followers, some were more attuned to receptive people than others. Andrew and Philip are prime examples. When they met Jesus, they couldn't wait to tell someone else the Good News. Andrew told Simon, and Philip told Nathanael (Jn. 1:40-46). Later Andrew brought the boy with the fish and the loaves to Jesus (Jn. 6:8-9). And still later Andrew and Philip together brought certain receptive Greeks to Jesus (Jn. 12:20-22).



***Seed-planting has a cost.
It takes time, effort, and
other valuable resources.
But it is vital to the build-
ing of the Kingdom of God.***

There have always been people like Philip and Andrew who have a gift for introducing people to Jesus. The rest of us should do everything in our power to help them exercise this gift. But in addition, Jesus wants all of us who are His followers to share our faith, according to our gifts and abilities.

Near the beginning of His ministry, Jesus sent all twelve of His disciples on a preaching mission (Matt. 10:5-42). Later, He sent 72 out on a similar mission (Luke 10:1-12). Jesus wanted **all** of His followers to plant seeds of faith in the lives of other people—especially the most receptive people.

The cost of seed-planting

Seed-planting has a cost. It takes time, effort, and sometimes other valuable resources. But it is vital to the building of the Kingdom of God. Consider these words of Jesus, spoken in the days just prior to His death:

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

— John 12:23-26, *NIV*

Some valuable lessons

I believe Jesus wants to teach us some valuable lessons in this passage about "going to seed for God."

The **first** is: if you want a crop, you have to plant some seed. You have to choose to do it! "Going to

seed for God" must be intentional, not accidental. You have to choose to be used by God.

Second, if you are "going to seed for God," a personal transformation must take place before the seed will produce a crop. That personal transformation includes dying to self-will

and getting in tune with God's will. It requires replacing our hard heart towards the lost for God's heart for the lost. It also means being willing to be planted right where we are or wherever God wants us to be. Planting also involves getting in the dirt—meeting people where they are. We can't plant seed unless we are willing to get dirty! All the while we must stay connected to Jesus, for its being in Him that enables us to produce fruit for the Kingdom of God (Jn. 15:1-8).

Third, good seed-planting requires soil preparation. Usually, the better the soil is prepared, the better the crop will be. Good preparation requires prayer—intense prayer, and by more than just the sower. The more people involved in prayer, the better the harvest. When individuals, couples, small groups, congregations, and communities gather for prayer, the potential for the harvest increases dramatically.

How much time are you willing to spend in prayer for the harvest? Here are some things for which you can pray:

- Ask God to give you His heart for the lost.
- Pray specifically for people you know who are not followers of Jesus.
- Pray for direction to plant seeds in the lives of these people.
- Pray for the ministry of your congregation.
- Pray for other ministries in your community and around the world.

Fourth, as we sow, so shall we reap. The more seeds sown, the greater the chances of a good harvest. It is vitally important to the harvest, therefore that everyone sows seed.

In the parable of the sower, Jesus reminds us that not all seed will produce fruit—because of persecution, misplaced priorities, or the influence of Satan. So it's important that we plant as much seed as possible. Many individuals and congregations who expect a great harvest are disappointed because they have not spent a lot of time planting seeds in the lives of people who have not yet found Jesus.

But what do I mean by seeds? Let me suggest three kinds of seeds that every Christian can plant that have the potential of producing fruit for the Kingdom of God.

Kinds of seed

Seed Actions. The first kind of seed is Seed Actions. These are deeds of kindness that we do, expecting nothing in return except to bring glory to God. Seed actions can be done where you live, where you go to school, where you work, or

control the harvest, but we can plant seed. In John 12, where Jesus talks about a seed dying and producing fruit, the passage ends with these words: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (Jn. 12:37, *NIV*).

Some people believed. Some lives were changed. Some people gained eternal life because they believed in Jesus that day. But others did not believe. Fortunately, many of those people were given second, third,



"Going to seed for God" must be intentional, not accidental. You have to choose to be used by God.

where you hang out. Seed actions can also be done as part of a greater effort, such as an outreach event in the community, at a camp or mission church, or around the world.

Seed Words. The second kind of seed is Seed Words. When you tell someone about the change Jesus has made in your life or when you explain the Good News about Jesus to another person, you are planting Seed Words. Seed Words can also be words of encouragement to others who are planting seeds in people's lives. People often keep silent when they have an opportunity to speak up. They do so either because they aren't prepared to speak or because they are afraid. Preparation and practice—along with encouraging one another—can make a difference.

Seed Money. The third kind of seed we can plant is Seed Money. Seed Money refers to the financial resources that we invest in spreading the Gospel. To spread seed in all the world's fields requires people and resources. And these cost money. For a reality check, try to determine how much of your personal finances and the finances of your church is "going to seed," and how much is being used just to fix up the barn.

Finally, remember that we cannot

and fourth chances to accept Jesus as their Lord, because seed-planting did not stop when Jesus went to heaven.

Seed-planting is still the primary mission of the Body of Christ today. Let's continue the work God has commissioned us to do, the work of "going to seed" for Him! Let's make or renew commitments to prepare the soil with prayer; to sow seeds in the lives of non-believers by our actions and by our words; and to give money to plant seeds that we can't plant ourselves.

If we do, we will see the seed multiplied many times over as thousands of people enter God's Kingdom—one person at a time. [✠]

Rev. Baker is pastor of the First Brethren Church of South Bend, Ind.

The task of evangelism cannot be delegated to the few. Worship and witness go hand in hand. We are all called to worship, and we are all called to witness in some way.

— John R. W. Stott

(From 20th Century Thoughts That Shaped the Church, compiled by Vernon McLellan, Tyndale, 2000)

Introducing . . .

Brethren Service Corps

By Karen Frado

*We have different gifts,
according to the grace given us.*
Romans 12:6 (NIV)

WE, THE PEOPLE of The Brethren Church, are rich with God-given skills, gifts, and abilities. We are electricians, teachers, caregivers, plumbers, domestic workers, administrators, musicians, students, graduates, and the list goes on and on.

God gives us the gifts that we enjoy. Then He often places in our hearts a yearning to share those gifts. The following two questions have repeatedly arisen in our churches:

- *How can I use the training, experience, and skills with which I have been blessed to glorify God?*
- *How can I offer my time and service to Christ before getting tied down to employment, house and car payments, family, and pets?*

Brethren Service Corps is an extension of Missionary Ministries of The Brethren Church. It is a response to these expressions of interest in service opportunities.

Brethren Service Corps matches your gifts and skills with the needs of mission churches. For example, we are currently developing a work team to help Miguel and Sonia Antúnez in Peru. The immediate need in their church is for the installation of plumbing and electrical systems, and the installation of exterior windows and doors. We are seeking individuals with the necessary skills for this project.

As you give, you also receive.

Brethren Service Corps offers opportunities for spiritual growth as you discover through experience that God has created many unique cultures and traditions, all of which He holds very dear to His heart.

Brethren Service Corps offers opportunities for spiritual growth as you exercise your gifts with an attitude of humble servanthood.

Brethren Service Corps offers opportunities for God to stamp upon your heart a love for people and a passion for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brethren Service Corps offers these opportunities in the context of supporting our mission churches and their communities.

Assignments

Short-term assignments will typically run from one to two weeks. Physical labor will most likely be involved (painting, cleaning, building, electrical work, plumbing, etc.).

Long-term assignments may run one to two years, depending upon the mission church's needs. Such assignments could involve teaching English, administration, teaching a skill or profession, etc.

Brethren Service Corps will also be extending its resources to the students of Ashland University. Michael Gleason, Director of the Center for Religious Life, is graciously helping to guide our efforts as we create mission opportunities for students.

Whether you are interested in serving on a short or long-term basis, or in a state-side or international mission assignment, your skills and your compassion can be taken directly to the field. Some information you need to know is:

- Pre-field training is dependent upon the length of assignment.
- Participants raise their own support.
- People unable to serve on projects can be involved by contributing money and resources.
- Communication is essential. Information will soon be available

on the Brethren Church National Office web site.

Share your interest! Let us know if you are considering becoming involved in this ministry. A decision to get involved with missions can be a difficult one. We are here to help you work through the issues.

The Challenge

The challenge is this: if you feel God drawing you towards this kind of ministry, *are you willing to explore the possibility* of serving Christ and others using your God-given skills



Karen Frado will serve as coordinator of the Brethren Service Corps as a part-time staff member for Missionary Ministries of The Brethren Church.

Karen received a Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degree from Ashland Theological Seminary in May of this year. She is a member of Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland, where she serves as prayer coordinator. She has also written several articles on prayer and the Lighthouses of Prayer movement for THE BRETHREN EVANGELIST.

Karen and her husband, Jim, who serves as Director of Stewardship and Development for The Brethren Church, have three school-age children.

as you live and work among peoples of different cultures and races who speak other languages?

The process for fulfilling this call may be easier than you think. Simply contact me, Karen Frado, and I will put the process in motion. You may contact me through the National Office at 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805; by phone at 877-289-1708; or by e-mail at karen@brethrenchurch.org. [✉]

The Women's Outlook Newsletter

A publication of the Brethren Women's Missionary Society



November–December 2000

Volume 14, Number 2

The President's Pen



Dear Ladies,

Yesterday the General Conference 2000 edition of *The Brethren Evangelist* arrived in our mail. Wow! A whole magazine dedicated to reporting the business sessions, celebrations, workshops, and blessings of both the adult and BYIC conventions! It's loaded with pictures of speakers, workshop leaders, missionaries, praise bands, people "behind the scenes," and two group pictures of those attending the Conference. What a wonderful way to remember the inspiration and blessings that all those in attendance received.

By now you have read the Women's Outlook Newsletter. For those attending the Conference, it will be a vivid reminder of all that took place. And, for you who were unable to be with us, you will be brought up to date on the business that was conducted as well as the lovely program we enjoyed.

It still boggles my mind that we were able to accomplish so much in a short amount of time. Who said women can't adapt to change? Our Executive Board did a superb job.

I promised in my last letter to report about Conference, but that has already been done. Now I want to tell you how beautiful Estes Park is! The mountains and valleys are unbelievable. Maybe I am overwhelmed by them, since I have spent my lifetime living on the "flat lands" of Indiana and Ohio. Don't get me wrong—

(continued on page 4)

LOOK AT THE BIRDS OF THE AIR

*"Look at the birds of the air;
they do not sow or reap or store away in barns,
and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
Are you not much more valuable than they?"*

Matthew 6:26

Before all the warm summer days become cold and most of the birds migrate, I want you to "look at the birds" we have enjoyed.

We invite them by providing cracked corn and a variety of bird seed to supplement their diet of bugs and worms. Dorman built several bird houses, so from various windows we have an eye-view of the birds.

The sparrows were predominant and several varieties came to the feeders. They moved into two houses and evidently liked the facilities. Three families were hatched.

The sparrows are fighters. One bird house was built specifically for the bluebird. It had a tiny entrance. Soon after the house was put in the garden, we were delighted to see the bluebird on the perch. As if by invitation, here came the sparrows en masse! They attacked the bluebird and then one self-appointed "carpenter" pecked at the opening, trying to enlarge it for himself.

This occurred during our supper. It was fun and frustrating! Fun to see the sparrows in turn working without success, but frustrating for the bluebird. He did not return.

We also had two hummingbirds, small and beautiful with distinctly different personalities. One would sit on the feeder for several seconds and drink the sugar water. The other would dart in, take a sip, and be gone in a flash! I named them the pensive and the nervous hummers. Occasionally in the evening if we sat on the porch very quietly, the pensive one (I guessed she was the female)

would come. And, yes, we could hear her hum! The very rapid beating of her wings produced a sound.

I went farther in my thoughts. The hummers reminded me of Bible readers. One sits and reads fervently, pondering and savoring God's Word. Another drops the Book open, glances at a verse, and is gone!

Then the ravens and crows! They gather on the housetops and have meetings, usually early in the mornings. And they find many juicy morsels in trash bags placed along the curbs before pick-up. However, they are very messy—scattering what they don't want. Nevertheless, I think of the ravens whom God sent to feed Elijah (I Kings 17:6).

When Christ taught His disciples on the mountain (Matthew 5–7), He spoke of: the Beatitudes, fulfillment of the law, prayer, God's care without our worry, and the practical application of His teaching (7:24–27). Christ's words in 6:26 are "Look at the birds of the air." Don't just see them, but look. They are beautiful, different, strong-willed, and useful. We are like them. God cares for them; He cares for us.

I like the hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful" by W. R. Waggoner.

*"Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.
All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all."*

Joan

Missionary Miscellany

Previously you have read of the blessings we received because so many missionaries were with us at Estes Park.

Mark and Chantal Logan, members of the Bethlehem Brethren Church (Harrisonburg, VA), are not sponsored by The Brethren Church, but serve with the Eastern Mennonite Church. You will remember they have served in various areas, including Argentina for several years and then Djibouti, Africa. Chantal reported on their new assignment.

She said, "We will live in Nairobi, Kenya, working with the people of Somalia. The country of Somalia has been in a state of civil war for the past ten years with no central government. For this reason, the office is located in a neighboring country, Kenya. We will go into Somalia when possible and hope that the mission can be re-established there, as soon as the situation becomes more stable.

"The Somali people are Moslems. There are very few Christian converts still in the country, but with whom we will try to stay in touch. There are also refugees in Kenya whom we will try to assist.

"This assignment is a joint assignment with Eastern Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Central Committee. The first organization is more directly involved with missions and the second with development. We will be country representatives for both organizations.

"We need and thank you for your prayers for safety and, above all, for discernment. The work is at a transition and we need to find out in which direction we should go."

Mark's birthday is December 21, and Chantal's birthday is December 29.

All the missionaries arrived safely back at their homes, with one exception. En route to Mexico City, Jen Thomas's van was broken into and she lost some valuable papers. Of course, this necessitated a delay in the schedule. Temporary papers permitted them to cross the Mexican border without incident. We are thankful for no injuries.

By having our international missionaries in attendance, there were many opportunities for us to be blessed with their presence and their ministries. Please continue your fervent prayers for them; they are in constant danger. And they struggle with personal problems, just as we do.

November is World Relief Month. Clive Calver, the president of World Relief, wrote:

"Do you ever think of the world as a lost cause? Well, in fact, it is! And it is precisely because our world is lost that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to seek and to save it.

"What is exciting to me is that God has chosen us — His church — to deliver the best news a lost and suffering world has ever heard: there is a Savior! One who stretched out His arms of love on the hard wood of a cross so that hurting people might know His embrace.

"He has asked us to show this love. How? By feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for widows and orphans, healing the broken-hearted, and breaking the chains of injustice.

"This is what the ministry of World Relief is all about. Working through evangelical churches in the United States and all around the world, we are showing a world in need that Jesus loves them.

"We need partners like you who will help send God's love around the world and save lives, rebuild families . . . and win this lost cause.

"That's the mandate of the church, and that's what the love of Christ will do."

Gene and Georgia Bell minister to the inner-city people in Indianapolis, IN. They are also missionaries-of-the-month in November.

The December missionaries-of-the-month are **Vincent and Shanti Edwin**, Indian students at Ashland Theological Seminary; **Jeff and Zenita Kaplan**, church planters in Highlands Ranch, Colorado; and **Jeff and Tracy Whiteside**, new church planters in Delaware, Ohio.

The new address for the Logans is Mark and Chantal Logan, P.O. Box 14894, Nairobi, Kenya. Addresses for the other special people are on page 47 in your *Devotional Guide*. Keep up your good reputation ("those beautiful W.M.S. women") and send them greetings and encouragement cards!

Happy Gram



HIGHWAY HIGHLIGHTS

While we traveled this summer, we noticed interesting bumper stickers and roadside signs. They were thought-provokers and sparked some conversation. These are a few:

- Opening the Bible is an eye-opener.
- Exposure to the SON prevents burning.
- Live well, Laugh often, Love much.
- Don't give up. Moses was a basket-case, too.
- Praise God! (This was on a North American Van Line truck.)
- Everybody has a photographic mind, but not everybody has film.

THE WOMEN'S OUTLOOK NEWSLETTER

Published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by the Women's Missionary Society of The Brethren Church.

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Women's Outlook Newsletter

In Memoriam

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15

These ladies were lovingly remembered at Conference with grateful thanks for sharing their lives with us.

Central District

Milledgeville Beacons

Evelyn Hanna
Lucile Woessner

Lanark Neoma

Gertrude Poffenberger
Rachel Kraft

Waterloo

Southeastern District

Hagerstown

Mary Harman

Oak Hill

Mona Nickels

Pennsylvania District

Masontown

Margaret Bowman

Johnstown III

Hazel Stutzman

Vinco

Kathryn Miller

Raystown

Evelyn Cornell

Brush Valley

Alma Lewis

Berlin

Frances Bockes

Midwest District

Falls City

Helen Hinz

Fort Scott

Daisy Ogle

Mulvane

Mamie Frame

Indiana District

North Manchester Hadassah

Edna Kindley

Warsaw

Marjorie Griswold

Loree II

Carol Warner

College Corner

Florence Roby

Jesse Fiant

Peru

Helen Matilda Stout

Bryan I

Doris Peltes

Grace Kleinhen

Inez Rogers

South Bend

Evelyn Tyson

Nappanee

Martina Chupp

Verna Lou Hostetter

Bonagene Hartzler

Marjorie Slabaugh

Ohio District

Fremont

Norma Schumacher

Canton Trinity Sr.

Rose Mary O'Conner

Williamstown

Ethna Marquart



District Doings



From Stockton

Virginia Edwards
President

The ladies in the Carson Oaks Community Church of Stockton, CA, conducted the worship service and informed the congregation of their many activities.

Their main focus is mission and benevolent support, and fund-raising efforts have enabled them to contribute \$3,128 for World Relief. In addition, they gave \$2,000 more for home and world missions, the Seminary, Riverside Christian School, their district camp and local benevolences, and sponsored a girl at the Indian orphanage. "None of this would have been possible without the dedicated efforts of our W.M.S. members and the unfailing participation and generosity of our church family and friends." Their most successful fund-raiser was the annual soup lunch.

"Through the years we have developed a special bond of love and fellowship with each other through our monthly meetings and two special social events — the Christmas brunch and the Mother-Daughter banquet.

"We feel we are an asset of and to the church."

Indeed, they are Women Meant to Serve!



The Milledgeville, IL, Hearts of Praise ladies sponsored College Care Packs for their college students. "Just what a kid wants" items were collected and sent to their six away-from-home students.

About the new theme for this year, "A Fruitful Spirit," the ladies

observed, "Who wouldn't want these things to be the fruit of their lives? The key to growing such qualities is not just the watering and fertilizer, etc., but the "root of the fruit" is being firmly planted in the Lord, being dependent on His love, and being obedient to His Word; then to bask in the light of the SON!"

The Milledgeville W.M.S. ladies gave a shower for the food pantry and enjoyed a box lunch picnic in July. They are good encouragers; not only do they send cards to the sick, but also special notes to the care-givers.



The Ashland, OH, Park Street Societies, Faith and Joy, presented a Singspiration Plus for an evening service in September. The congregation had the opportunity to request favorite hymns and songs, but the "plus" came from special parts of the service. Polly Benshoff played a piano prelude and a beautiful medley of old hymns; Scot Millhouse was worship leader; a male quartet sang three numbers; and Bob Rosa, the director of recruitment from Ashland Theological Seminary, gave an update of enrollment, programs, and building progress. The offering was designated for the seminary.

Refreshments followed the service and concluded a good evening of fellowship.

The men thought they were honorary members, but we extended the membership borders and said W.M.S. also meant "women and men serve!"



NATIONAL
BIBLE WEEK
November 19-26, 2000



Traditionally Thanksgiving Week is also National Bible Week. When we remember the purpose of establishing a Thanksgiving Day by the Pilgrims—that of focusing on God, the giver of all good gifts, it is natural that we also focus on His Word.

We can read books and articles about *The Bible*; we can even sing hymns and choruses about *The Bible*, but until we actually read *The Bible*, we are missing God's Word. As good as these other things are, they are man's words. This week will you join me in establishing a new or renewed focus on God by reading His Word?

The President's Pen (continued)

I love the fields of green corn and beans and the fields of ripe golden grain. In all our travels this summer, whether through the miles and miles of prairie, the gently rolling hills of southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, or the rugged mountains of the West, I never stopped being amazed and awed at the magnificence of God's handiwork.

After our many miles of riding in the van on our way to Colorado, it was good to unpack suitcases and get settled in Mt. Ypsilon Lodge. Our lodge was a distance from the auditorium and cafeteria, so we got our daily quota of exercise walking back and forth for meetings and meals.

We were privileged to have Dave, Sheri, and Jonathan next door to us, while Davey "hung out" with the youth from Smoky Row. We shared many of the blessings of Conference with them, as well as with our friends and acquaintances. It seemed as though things had just begun when the Conference ended and it was time to pack up and head back East. Dave and Sheri and the boys left before Friday noon, as they had to hurry back to South Carolina for

The Editor's Ending

Dear Friend,

I have enjoyed reading some of the suggested books for this year. *Mission Possible* is a must! The work of one woman (occasionally two) in the forest of New Guinea as she learned and translated the tribal language into the New Testament is miraculous. It is exciting to read how the villagers learned to read, accepted the Christian faith, and shared it with others.

How I Know God Answers Prayer is a classic! All of us can give examples of God meeting our BIG needs, but the author was a pioneer mis-

Davey and Jonathan to start school on Monday.

We left Estes Park around 3:00 Friday afternoon and drove to Denver for the night. Saturday found us crossing Kansas and Missouri. We enjoyed seeing the fields of sunflowers, as they reminded us of the ones we saw in Moldova when we visited Dave and Sheri.

That night we had difficulty finding a motel due to the state fair. It was not until we reached Columbia, Missouri, that we found a motel. The next day we stopped in St. Louis and visited the arch. Everyone, except me, rode to the top! I had been up there once, and that was enough, so opted to visit the museum and shop instead.

Lunch was enjoyed at a McDonald's on a river boat. Jeff and Tracy's kids thought that was neat. From St. Louis, it was drive, drive, and drive, until we reached Powell about 1:30 Monday morning. Needless to say, we slept in that day!

All this seems like such a long time ago, as we are back home and settled again, but not for long. We are making some big changes—but more about that next time.

Until then, I'm enjoying this beautiful fall weather as the leaves change from green to gold, red and brown. And when you read this, perhaps your trees will already be decked with patches of furry white!

With Christian love,
Charlene
Charlene

sionary to mainland China with her husband and children. She wrote this long before modern conveniences and medical discoveries, when she depended upon God for every tiny need. This challenges our faith.

Perhaps some of your societies receive your Thank Offering during November as part of your thanksgiving. If yes or if no, remember that your Thank Offerings are used for benevolences: world and home missions, Riverside Christian School, Ashland Theological Seminary, the W.M.S. scholarship and the Campus Ministry at Ashland University.

Just as the Lord pours daily blessings on us, we need to respond to Him with our verbal thanks and our tangible gifts for others. Every cent is given away; none is withheld. With your gifts, you make a difference in another's life. With your prayers, God makes a difference in your life.

Jesus' encounter with the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19) is usually preached at this season. Of the ten who were healed, only one returned and gave thanks to Jesus. Do we say thanks for His gifts to us? How thankful are we? One or nine?

Martin Rinkart's hymn, written in 1640, is timely for us:

*Now thank we all, our God,
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices.*

Please don't consider a Ziggy cartoon as sacrilegious. Instead, I think it is quite appropriate. With his head bowed, Ziggy comments: "And this Thanksgiving, as we count our blessings, let's be mindful of those who count theirs and find many of them missing!"

I hope you have a wonderful season of thanks living and a joyous holy Christmas!

Your friend,

Joan
Joan

Women's Outlook Newsletter

Dr. Clive Calver, the driving force of World Relief

*In America, November is a time for special **thanksgiving** to God for all the blessings He has showered upon us. In The Brethren Church, November is also World Relief emphasis month, a time to remember those who do not share the blessings we enjoy and to focus on ways we can use our abundance to help meet their needs.*

The articles on this and the following two pages look at ways World Relief is at work in needy areas of our world and how we can be involved in that work. The first article (below), gives us insights into the heart and passion of Dr. Clive Calver, the driving force of World Relief.

WHETHER he's addressing ABC's *Nightline*, Moody Bible Institute, Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, or the President of Sierra Leone, it doesn't take long to realize that Dr. Clive Calver is using every ounce of his being to challenge the church to work together to change this world for Jesus Christ. In short, he calls for no less than incarnational living in a world that's going to hell.

"I don't want to help the poor in Jesus name," Calver regularly points out. "I want to help churches help the poor in Jesus' name so that the world might know Him." Calver's passion is to help church be church and fulfill its God-given mandate in Haiti, Sudan, Mongolia, and beyond.

The message is getting around. Living as though there's no tomorrow so that people may experience the love of the church and come face to face with Jesus, Calver averages 20 flights a month, caring

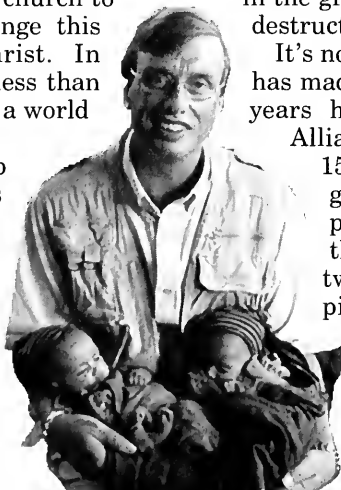
for the disaster victim and the AIDS sufferer, empowering the local church, casting vision for the global church, and propelling people to action. A gifted communicator and builder of dynamic movements of people, he's becoming a major advocate among U.S. evangelicals for the church and the world's poor.

Since Calver came from Britain to become president of World Relief in 1997, World Relief's ministry of helping churches has grown more than 130 percent. As a result, churches in Sudan, Turkey, Ethiopia, Albania-Kosovo, and Sierra Leone now have desperately-needed programs to help the devastated people around them.

It's Calver's passion for theology that leads to his passion for the church and the poor. His staff knows him for his two loves: preaching the Word of God and walking with those in the grip of poverty, AIDS, and destruction.

It's not the first time this Brit has made waves. During the 14 years he led the Evangelical Alliance of the U.K., the 150-year-old organization grew 400 percent and the percent of evangelicals in the country grew from two to seven percent. His pithy and thought-provoking comments made him a household name and the BBC's number-one choice for comments on issues of the day from an evangelical perspective.

"What's more important, social action or the gospel? That's easy," he says. "It's a bit hard to preach the gospel to someone who's dead. So let's keep them alive and explain the reason that we did it is Jesus." [✚]



World Relief President Dr. Clive Calver loves children. Here he holds twin babies in Ethiopia, where World Relief runs a feeding center for severely malnourished children and distributes dry food to approximately 34,000 people.

World Relief photo by Pamela Barden

Earthquakes in Turkey

TWO major earthquakes shattered Turkey's densely populated industrial heartland last year. On August 17, 1999, the first quake struck in early morning darkness, its 7.8 magnitude easily toppling buildings and buckling streets.

Within two days staff from World Relief Kosovo arrived in Izmit, the epicenter of the quake. They began distributing food and blankets to survivors, in partnership with local churches. Conscious of impending winter and the drastic housing shortage, World Relief provided more than 300 prefabricated modular housing units in Derince, a town just outside Izmit.

When the second quake struck the town of Düzce on Nov. 12, World Relief was prepared to respond immediately.



World Relief set up nearly 650 prefabricated homes in Turkey to provide housing for earthquake survivors.

World Relief photo by Steve Houston

diately. Some of the prefabricated structures were sent to the area for use as a makeshift hospital, since the local hospital had been severely damaged by the quake, and doctors were treating patients in the streets.

World Relief continued working in Turkey through September 2000 to assist the local church and to facilitate the process of rehabilitation for survivors through active support of social services, education, and trauma counseling.

Praise God:

- For good relationships built with churches in Turkey.
- For the respect the authorities in Turkey have for World Relief.

Prayer requests:

- That the church in Turkey continues to exhibit the love of Jesus.
- That the leaders of Turkey will be open to God's love. [✚]

World Relief: Battling HIV and AIDS in Africa

AIDS is the number-one killer in Africa, claiming 6,000 lives each day. AIDS deaths have resulted in 13.5 million orphans. Women brutally raped during the Rwandan war in 1994 now find themselves battling an epidemic that is also killing their friends and relatives.

"Only the church can approach AIDS with hope," says World Relief President Dr. Clive Calver. "Not only do African churches have the local presence and moral authority to address behavioral issues, but they have a unique message of hope to offer to people living with AIDS."

World Relief is partnering with local churches in Malawi, Mozambique, and Rwanda to care for the

sick, dying, and orphaned, and to prevent the spread of the disease. World Relief is training church leaders and volunteers with a biblically-based AIDS prevention curriculum and pastoral counseling curriculum.

In Malawi, four churches recently began a visitation and counseling program for those with AIDS. In addition, World Relief is helping churches begin income-producing projects to support people living with AIDS and AIDS orphans. These include community gardens, a fishing project, and a nursery school. Eight churches are also growing food for 50 families caring for AIDS orphans.

In Mozambique, seven volunteer pastors trained by World Relief in AIDS awareness and counseling are in turn saturating area churches with teaching. "All the churches say, 'Please come back and give us more information on this AIDS,'" says Pastor Naftal Manguela.

In Rwanda, World Relief is training pastors and lay leaders to mobilize HIV/AIDS prevention programs for youth. Anti-AIDS clubs provide a forum for peer education and positive reinforcement for youth to remain abstinent. A unique manual for Rwandans who are providing care in their homes for those living and dying with AIDS has been pub-

Photo by Jon Warren for World Relief



One woman's experience with AIDS in Rwanda

By Laura White, World Relief staff writer

WHEN Anastasie Iyakaremye's husband died of AIDS in 1997, Anastasie was left with their three young children and three teenage orphans from her husband's first marriage. She was also left with his \$294 debt. As a result, her electricity was cut off and her children are in and out of school.

After the death of Anastasie's husband, men began to stop by her home, hoping they could lure her into having sex. The financial temptation must have been great, but Anastasie explains her reasons for resisting:

"Now that my husband had died and I knew the cause of his death, I didn't want to be a cause of anyone else's death. So I thought it was important to find Christians, and I was led to Christ."

She became involved with Bethsaida Ministry, a Christian support group for HIV-infected women in Kigali. "It was very encouraging to meet with [this group] and share our problems together. Praying is the most important thing."

Anastasie has noticed a difference in her spirit. "There was a change," she relates. "The genocide left lots of wounds in my heart. I was not forgiving. I had lots of hatred for the people who killed my people. Now I see people are God's creation, and I forgive."

She even found herself forgiving her husband for infecting her. "Before I was saved, I was very bitter. I wasn't happy with him. I had not been able to forgive him. After I was saved, I realized I needed to forgive him knowing that what he did was done in ignorance. People who are not born-again have no conviction for sin. I have forgiven him and I don't hold a grudge." [✠]



Jesus has brought light to the darkness of Anastasie Iyakaremye's life.

Rev. Rugubira Theophile prays with a member of Bethsaida Ministry, a support group for women dying of AIDS that he founded and leads in Kigali, Rwanda. "Today these women openly confess [that] if they die, they have hope. They know Jesus," Rev. Theophile says.

lished by World Relief and the churches of Rwanda.

World Relief and the churches in Africa are reaching out to share Jesus' love with people living with AIDS and their families. "If African churches fail to respond to the challenge of AIDS, then they will have failed their people and their Lord," says Dr. Calver. "But they cannot respond alone. They need support," he hastens to add.

Pray for the battle against HIV:

- For effective distribution and use of the new World Relief home-care manual.
- For churches meeting physical and spiritual needs.
- For a profound change in behavior in the lives of new Christians because of their faith in Christ.
- For funds to help provide training for church leaders and health volunteers across Africa. [✠]

Photo by Jon Warren for World Relief

World Relief: Kosovo — loans to rebuild lives

IN THE PAST YEAR, World Relief and churches in Albania worked together to help families in war-torn Kosovo survive the cold winter months by rebuilding 1,000 homes. In addition, women's support groups helped meet the immediate physical and emotional needs of some 700 widows and family members by developing friendships and distributing hygiene items, cooking supplies, and bedding. In the United States, World Relief and American churches welcomed almost 1,000 Kosovar refugees, offering them a caring community to help them rebuild their lives.

This past spring World Relief began offering loans to families in Kosovo to help them restart their businesses and to jump-start their devastated economy. By the end of September, more than 100 groups of participants in Pristina and nearby towns had formed community banks and received their first loans.

As community bank members revive the local economy, they also encourage and hold each other accountable for loan repayments. Participants are able to support their families while building relationships of trust with others.

Bedri Azemi is one person whose family is benefiting from this loan program. During the war, Bedri and his eldest son were imprisoned for 42 days and tortured by the Serbian military. Bedri, his wife, and their six children survived the war, but their home and business were destroyed. They now live in the burned shell that was once their home. More than a year after the end of the war, they are still trying to pick up the pieces of their lives.

In June, Bedri and three friends who survived the war together formed a community bank. Bedri, a tinsmith, uses his small-business loan to purchase tin and aluminum sheets to make roofing materials. As the sole provider for his family,

he is grateful for this means to restart his business.

In the coming year, World Relief's loan program will benefit about 12,000 people. This loan program will continue to strengthen families and their communities in Kosovo.

By offering hurting people hope in Christ's name, World Relief is helping to prepare the spiritual soul in Kosovo for church planting and

growth. World Relief plans to partner with Albanian churches in their long-term goal of planting churches in Kosovo.

Prayer requests for Kosovo:

- For reconciliation between the factitious Serbian and Albanian communities.
- That the few evangelical churches in Kosovo will grow stronger.
- That an evangelical breakthrough will occur in Kosovo as a result of the desire of Albanian Christians to plant churches in Kosovo, bringing many people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- For funding for computers and accounting software that are needed to track loans. [†]

After the floods in Mozambique

TORRENTIAL RAINS lashed Mozambique in February, sending ravaging floodwaters throughout much of the country. A five-foot wall of water surged over the banks of the Limpopo River, across the flat plains of southern Mozambique, and into the town of Chokwe.

Dr. Pieter Ernst, director of World Relief's health programs in Mozambique, used a small boat to rescue more than 300 people, who clung to trees and rooftops for survival. "In almost all the trees," Ernst said, "people were either praying or singing spiritual songs because they realized they had no power left. Some with charms around their wrists threw them off and joined the rest, praying and singing. I told them, 'This is God's grace. If you don't believe there is a God, you shall believe from today onward.'"

As the largest international aid agency working in that area, World Relief was in a position to begin relief work immediately. A strong network of churches and community organizations already existed and was used to distribute emergency medicines and food to those in need. During the first month after the flood, World Relief partnered with area churches to distribute tools and seeds to more than 35,000 families. At harvest time in August, the women showed their appreciation by bringing vegetables to World Relief staff as thanksgiving gifts.

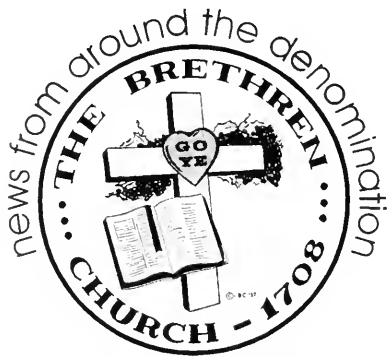
World Relief is also assisting 7,500 families with the rebuilding of their homes. In addition, support for the local economy has been provided in the form of emergency grants of \$100 to each of a number of small business owners, and by the rebuilding of the Central Market in the town of Xai-Xai. Some 1,300 families worked on the Central Market in exchange for housing materials from World Relief. At Xai-Xai—and in a second market under construction—small businesses will thrive once again.

Prayer requests for Mozambique:

- That churches around the world will continue to respond to the needs of Mozambique.
- For growth of the church in Mozambique.
- For strength for the Mozambique people as they rebuild their lives and for wisdom for World Relief staff as they aid in this process. [†]



World Relief provided tools and seeds for more than 35,000 families in Mozambique.



St. James Pastor Brian Moore demonstrates his servant heart

St. James, Md. — Dr. Brian Moore, pastor of the St. James Brethren Church, has a servant heart. When he is not serving his congregation, he serves sundaes (*below*) and other food items at a nearby Shoney's restaurant. It's all part of the St. James congregation's involvement in REACH, a community organization that ministers to senior citizens and the homeless.

Last fall, for example, REACH asked the St. James congregation to pack a week's lunches for a homeless shelter. Seven Sunday school classes volunteered to do this task. One of the classes also collected toiletries to be given to senior citizens, and used air conditioners were also donated to needy seniors.

Then Pastor Moore received a call asking if he would be a waiter at the local Shoney's one evening, with all his tips to go to REACH. He agreed, and a number of the St. James Brethren showed up to make sure he would have someone to serve.

He must have made a hit on that occasion, for later REACH called again, asking for a repeat performance. On this occasion, more of his congregation showed up, keeping him hopping. But it was for a good cause, and Pastor Moore keeps a good attitude about his flock's demands for prompt service!

— reported by Sandra L. Culler



Anthony Price ordained to Brethren eldership July 1 at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon

New Lebanon, Ohio — Anthony M. Price was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church and his wife Geneva was consecrated as the wife of an elder in a service held Saturday, July 1, at The Brethren Church in New Lebanon.

Dr. Charles Munson, retired Ashland University and Ashland Theological Seminary professor, gave the message for the service. Other Brethren elders who participated were William Walk, Eugene Oburn, Donald Rowser, James R. Black, and Tom Schiefer.

Moderator Don Rusk read the action of The Brethren Church of New Lebanon calling for Tony's ordination; and Carl Howenstine, moderator of Trinity Brethren Church, Canton, Ohio, where Tony serves on the pastoral staff, read that church's affirmation of this call. Sharon Walk played the prelude for the service. Special music included a duet by Rev. Eugene and DeAnn Oburn, Tony's parents-in-law, and also a solo by Mrs. Oburn.

Tony, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Price, was born March 21, 1972, in Dayton, Ohio, and raised in nearby West Alexandria. His family attended The Brethren Church in New Lebanon, where, at the age of eight, Tony accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior and was received into membership. Nine years later, in 1989, Tony committed his life to full-time Christian service.

A 1990 graduate of Twin Valley South High School, he attended Ashland University (B.S. in Elem. Ed., 1994) and Ashland Theological Seminary (M.Div., 2000). Following college, he taught for three years at Dayton Christian Schools in Brookville and Dayton, also serving as youth pastor for The Brethren



Rev. Tony and Geneva Price

Church of New Lebanon. When he entered seminary in 1997, he began serving Trinity Brethren Church as *assistant pastor*.

On August 13, 1994, Tony married Geneva Oburn of Pleasant Hill, Ohio. Geneva, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Eugene Oburn (now of Bunker Hill, Ind.), attended Ashland University, where she received a B.S. degree in Music

Education in 1994. She taught at Dayton Christian Schools, Rootstown High School, and most recently at Southeast High School near Ravenna, Ohio.

Rev. Price is continuing his ministry at Trinity Brethren Church, with the new title of *associate pastor*. He also teaches third grade at Lake Center Christian School in Hartville, Ohio. Geneva, who is expecting their first child in December, is now focusing on serving in the church and at home. [✚]

Churches Planting Churches conference to be held in Indiana

One of the goals of The Brethren Church is to plant 50 churches in the next ten years. In accordance with that goal, the Indiana District Ministry of Missions will be sponsoring a conference, Churches Planting Churches, December 1-2, 2000, at the Brethren Retreat Center in Shipshewana, Ind. The goal of the conference is to get every church excited about the opportunities of reaching people for Christ by planting new churches.

Registration forms and more information about the conference were enclosed in the October 27th *Leadership Letter* (sent to pastors and moderators). Or contact Rev. Bill Shipman at 219-267-6908. [✚]

Joshua Racey makes appreciation month extra special for Maurertown Pastor Richard Craver

Maurertown, Va. — On Sunday, July 30, nine-year-old Joshua Racey presented a special surprise to his pastor, Rev. Richard Craver of the Maurertown Brethren Church.

Josh, the son of Stacy and Lori Vormbrock, was born with Downs Syndrome but is very smart, has a terrific sense of humor, and a bubbly personality. He is part of a Sunday school class that uses a curriculum called *Bridges*, which is specifically geared for people who are mentally disabled.

The emphasis of the class for the summer quarter was on prophets. The class talked about the fact that prophets were God's messengers to the people and that today pastors are God's messengers.

For more than a month, Josh kept secret a project he worked on in the class—a poster of appreciation he designed for Pastor Craver. The message on the poster was "Thanks for telling us about God and Jesus." Josh chose pictures to depict what



Joshua Racey displays the poster he made for his pastor; Rev. Richard Craver (r.), as (l. to r.) his mother; Lori Vormbrock, and his teachers, Michelle Craver and Marie Vann, look on.

he had learned in class and also to show some of the things that Pastor Craver does and teaches.

The first picture that Josh chose was of a Bible, "like the one that Pastor Craver reads to us." The second was of a little boy kneeling in prayer, which Josh also eagerly demonstrated for Pastor Craver. Next was a picture of a cross, because "Jesus died for us." But he



also glued on a picture of a tomb, because "Jesus isn't dead—He is alive!" Josh's favorite part of the poster was a picture of a church building, which can be lifted to reveal a pastor standing at a pulpit, "just like Richard does," and people in the congregation "who are listening to Pastor Craver" as he tells about God and His Son, Jesus.

After the presentation, Josh enjoyed posing for photographs with Pastor Craver, his Sunday school teachers Marie Vann and Michelle Craver, and his mother. The pictures came back in the middle of September—in time for them, along with the poster, to be displayed on the bulletin board for Pastor Appreciation Month in October.

— reported by Michelle Craver

Pilgrimage of Faith video series now available

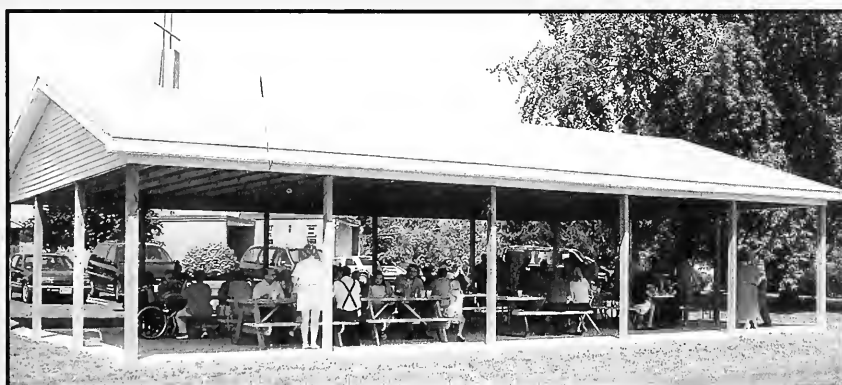
Ashland, Ohio — The long-awaited video series about Brethren beliefs and practices is now available.

Titled *Pilgrimage of Faith: The Witness of the Brethren Church*, this 13-part video series explores the history, beliefs, and practices that give the Brethren their distinctive identity. In addition to the 13 video session, *Pilgrimage of Faith* comes in a set that includes teaching instructions, lesson plans, and supplemental readings.

Pilgrimage of Faith should find wide use in Sunday school classes, small-group studies, membership classes, and other church settings. In addition, many Brethren will want to view the videos in the comfort of their own homes.

Every pastor and every Brethren church in the denomination is receiving a copy of this video series free. Sunday school classes, other groups in the church, or interested Brethren who want their own copies may purchase a set for \$20 from the National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, Ohio.

[3]



Canton, Ohio — Trinity Brethren Church of Canton dedicated a new pavilion on Sunday, July 9, following the morning worship service. The congregation then initiated the pavilion with a carry-in dinner. The pavilion was erected as a memorial to Robert L. Frederick (deceased 8-1-98), a longtime, faithful member of Trinity who served for many years as head usher and chair of the trustees. It was built entirely with volunteer labor and monies donated for the memorial. Trinity Pastors James R. Black and Tony Price led the dedication service.

— reported by Wanda Kurlinski



In Memory

Brethren pastor **Rev. Marlin Lee McCann**, 65, died Sunday, October 15, in North Manchester, Ind., as the result of a stroke suffered three weeks earlier.

Marlin was born July 24, 1935, in Waterloo, Iowa, the son of Walter Otis and Vivian B. McCann, both now deceased. He became a member of the First Brethren Church of Waterloo. On April 21, 1957, he married Lila J. Miller of Smithville, Ohio.

He was a graduate of Ashland College (University) and Ashland Theological Seminary. He was ordained an elder in The Brethren Church in 1960 and during his ministry served

the Wayne Heights (Waynesboro, Pa.), Mt. Olive (Pineville, Va.), Bryan (Ohio) First, North Manchester First, and Milledgeville (Ill.) Brethren Churches.

He had a beautiful tenor voice and frequently sang for General Conference and on other occasions. He also



sang with the Rockingham Male Chorus of Rockingham County, Va., and with the Madrigal Singers in Bryan, Ohio.

He is survived by his wife, Lila, of

North Manchester; two sons and their wives—Michael and Mary McCann of Bryan, and Steve and Joy McCann of Bridgewater, Va.; and five grandsons.

The funeral service for Brother

McCann was held October 19 at the North Manchester First Brethren Church, with Rev. Kurt Stout (pastor), Rev. David Cooksey, and Rev. Robert Schmeiser officiating. Special music for the service was presented by the Clarion Bell Choir and the Adult Choir.

Helen A. Preston

Helen A. Preston, 67, wife of Rev. Owen H. Preston, pastor of the Berlin, Pa., Brethren Church, died October 8 after an extended illness.

She was born March 1, 1933, in Mt. Savage, Md., the daughter of Jesse and Susanna Trimble. She is survived by her husband of 45 years; one daughter and son-in-law; one grandson and two step-grandchildren; and six great grandchildren.

Her funeral service was held at the Berlin Brethren Church with Rev. Ronald Beachley, Rev. Robert Hoffman, and Rev. T. William Preston (her husband's brother) officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the Berlin Brethren Church window fund. [†]

Dorothy Nelson — keeping young at heart

Lanark, Ill. — Dorothy Nelson, a member of the Lanark First Brethren Church, doesn't let her 87 years keep her from being young at heart. For a church picnic in July, Bob Zuck tucked a motorcycle with a sidecar in his picnic basket and gave rides to everyone. Dorothy was the first one to ride!

Dorothy lives a busy life. She visits a nursing home twice a week, swims three times a week, and she can always be counted on to provide a meal. She is currently vice president of the



Dorothy Nelson, ready for her ride with Bob Zuck.

local W.M.S. and already has led the program committee in organizing this year's public service. She's also a member of the church's Core group that travels to Ashland frequently, and she serves on the pastoral search committee.

But perhaps what is most important about Dorothy is that she is a blessing to the Lanark Church. And that's because she really cares about God's work and for the members of her church family.

— submitted by Shirley Miller

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The Real Christ of Christmas

By J.W. Jepson

THE CHRISTMAS-CARD concept of Jesus, however beautified by gold and glitter, falls short of presenting Him as He is today.

No longer is He an infant. The artists portray Him as a Babe resting in His mother's arms, or as a Shepherd carrying a lamb. They paint Him blessing the children, or knocking at a door, or agonizing in the Garden. These pictures may show us the heart of our Savior, but they fall short of showing His present position of power and glory.

Today He is no longer "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." He is, rather, the Mighty One "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9).

Of those with our Lord in the days of His flesh, perhaps no one was closer to Him than John the Beloved. John leaned on Jesus' bosom; he

was included in the select three; in fact, he even saw a glimpse of Christ's glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Certainly it could be said that if anyone knew Jesus, John did.

But one day on the Isle of Patmos, the aged apostle heard a voice behind him "as of a trumpet." He did not recognize it and turned to see the source. Then, for the first time, he caught the full impact of the brilliant glory of Christ as He stood in triumphant authority in the midst of the golden candlesticks!

His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

— Revelation 1:14-17, NIV

All those years John had remembered Jesus as He was in the days of His flesh—sometimes weary, sometimes sad, sometimes rejoicing, sometimes flashing a glimpse of the greater glory. But now he saw Him as He is forever in His exalted majesty and glory!

Is your vision of Christ too dim? Paul, who became acquainted with Jesus on the Damascus road when a light "brighter than the noonday sun" shone about him, kept this vision of power and glory alive in his heart and shared it with others. For the Ephesians he prayed:

... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know ... his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all thing under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

— Ephesians 1:17-23, NIV

When Jesus ascended to be again with the Father, He did not retire to the sidelines. He ascended a throne of power! Our vision of Him should be of a mighty Sovereign. We should realize that He is now our Advocate, the Author and Finisher of our faith,

(continued on next page)



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Going Beyond the Baby

By Roger Stogsdill

THE BIRTH OF A BABY is an automatic invitation to people to come and see. Babies are just so cute and cuddly that people can't resist them. Babies are the ultimate irresistible force.

Our church's newest baby is proof enough of that. Hardly anyone shook my hand after the church service the first Sunday his parents brought him. When I looked around, I found more people in the nursery admiring the baby than I found in any one location anywhere else on the grounds. I'm not complaining, because I couldn't resist either.

That was probably similar to the scene when Jesus was born. No matter that He was born in a stable. At the very least, the innkeeper's wife had to see and hold the Baby. Had the innkeeper's wife's name been Kim Stogsdill, she would have carried Him into the inn to show Him to all the guests, slapping the hands of any who tried to take Him away from her.

It is little wonder that our manger scenes today have a lot of people in them. The only mistake we make in setting them up is in putting too much space between the figures. Back then they would have all been huddled around the baby Jesus, trying to squeeze between each other to get a better look. You see, the birth of Jesus is the brilliant, irresistible invitation of God to come to Him. It is the announcement that God's house is open wide to all who accept the invitation.

Adults aren't nearly as cute as babies. They're much more resistible, too. Certainly people are more attracted to the beginning of life than to its end. Death is just as irresistible as birth, but in a completely different way. Few people run towards death, wanting to embrace it the way they do newborns. If they could run away from it they would.

This brings me back to the birth of Jesus as an invitation from God to come to Him. Many turn away when they read the invitation and understand that it means to follow Jesus from birth on. The invitation is to follow Christ to adulthood and to His death on the cross. Even the

Bible tells us that most people abandoned Him there. Jesus on the cross is a horrifying scene. It's ugly, terrible, not at all like the cute cuddly bundle in the manger.

In reality, however, his death only appeared to be ugly. The beauty comes out in Christ's resurrection. It showed that all of Jesus' life, from birth to death, was the invitation to come to God, not just His birth.

This Christmas season don't just celebrate the birth of Christ. Allow the joy of the season to be an invitation for you to celebrate all that Jesus accomplished on your behalf. He fought temptation and won. He bore your suffering. He lived sinlessly, but still paid the price for sin—death. It wasn't for Himself that He did this. For whom did He do it? For you!

Accept the forgiveness He offers. Be drawn in by everything about Him. Yield to His call. Accept His invitation. Come into God's family and enjoy the abundant life He brings. [†]

Rev. Stogsdill is pastor of the First Brethren Church of Tucson, Ariz. This article first appeared in the Tucson First Brethren Church newsletter.

The Real Christ of Christmas

(continued from page 1)

our Mediator, Leader, Counselor, the Captain of our salvation.

To John He said, "I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades" (Rev. 1:18).

How well do we know the real Christ? How much better can we know Him? When we pray, let us not think of Him as a mere human. The days of His humiliation are past. May the Holy Spirit help us to know Him in the fullness of the power He has today. He is all-sufficient.

While we honor Him this Christ-

mas season because He came to earth as a Babe in Bethlehem, let us realize that He now sits enthroned in omnipotent power and is ready and able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

Let us follow on to know Him better, always keeping in mind that the most the eye of faith may behold here is very small compared to what we shall see on that wonderful day when "we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). [†]

Dr. Jepson is Senior Pastor of Life in Christ Center (Assemblies of God), The Dalles, Oregon.

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Pontius' Puddle



© Joel Kauffman



Opened a year ago in an abandoned crack house on 17th Street SE—on a block once so dominated by gangs it was called “Murder Row”—The House is an afternoon hangout for students from nearby Anacostia High School and Kramer Junior High School.

An urban oasis

It’s meant to be an urban oasis where teens get encouragement, praise and the kind of stable relationships with adults that are often missing in their lives. Here

volunteers from local churches lead discussions about dealing with sexuality, anger and career paths.

Every afternoon about 5:30 p.m., a meal is served—preceded by grace.

“It has an amazing effect on you and makes you want to come back,” said House regular Damien Rose, 18, a recent Anacostia graduate. “They don’t preach the word of God, but they sneak it on you. You at least educate yourself by listening to the staff.”

This approach puts The House in line with a growing trend in evangelical Christianity to spread the Gospel in places where young people congregate but without overt religious symbols or rituals.

“Most of the faith-based organizations generally work with the same 20 percent of the [youth] population who are typically already plugged into church,” said Fitzhugh, 37, an Ohio native who played defensive guard for the Denver Broncos but now holds Christian pep rallies at schools across the country for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

“What excites me most about The House,” he said, “is reaching kids beyond that 20 percent.”

“It’s not the churchy atmosphere,” added Musgrove, 42, an assistant pastor at Bolden’s church. “We teach them by our lifestyle, and we love them. They know that.”

A safe place

“I come to have fun, to relax,” said Jonathan Gibson, 20, who prefers his nickname, “Big John.” “You don’t have to worry about any trouble. In Southeast, you can’t walk around if you don’t know anybody. But here, once you come through that door, it’s a whole new thing. I just feel safe in the place. I can let my guard down.”

The House’s neighbors are overjoyed at its arrival. Edward Johnson, Sr., who organized the District’s first Orange Hat citizen patrol group in 1988, calls it “a plus all the way,” noting that teens who drop by also help pick up trash in the neighborhood “sometimes twice a week.”

In addition, “the young people who attend get a lot out of it,” Johnson said. “When they come away, they seem to be more relaxed, they have more manners. It’s made a difference. A big difference.”

The facility is open from 3:30 to 8 p.m.,

(continued on next page)



The article below appeared in the September 21, 2000, issue of The Washington Post, in the magazine section called, the District Extra (above). It was written by Washington Post Staff Writer Caryle Murphy. The article is reprinted here with the permission of The Washington Post.

The House is in part a ministry of Southeast Christian Fellowship, our Brethren church in Washington, D.C., where Dr. Rickey Bolden serves as senior pastor. This ministry has been so successful that The House has now reached its capacity. Therefore Pastor Bolden has developed an expansion plan.

A video by one of Washington’s most-watched television stations highlighting the work of The House was recently sent to every Brethren church. This video includes details about Pastor Bolden’s expansion plan and tells how your church can help financially with this project. Ask your pastor to borrow your church’s copy of this video if you have not yet had a chance to view it.

BEFORE THEY MET, the three men already had much in common. They had sought fame and riches through athletics. They’d seen firsthand in their families the havoc caused by poverty, violence and drug addiction. And they were all committed Christians who had opted for careers in youth ministry.

So when former pro football players Rickey Bolden and Steve Fitzhugh met one-time Olympic-rated track star J.T. Musgrove at Anacostia High School’s mentoring program a few years back, it was almost guaranteed that something unique and spiritually charged would emerge from their friendship.

And it has. **The House.**

also, they find a range of enriching activities or just a place to relax. And though no crosses or other religious artifacts are displayed, the aim of its three founders is to subtly get across the message that “choosing Christ” is the ticket to what’s real in life.

“We want to spiritually transform the lives of young people through relationships,” said Dallas-born Bolden, 39, a former Cleveland Browns tight end who is the pastor of Southeast Christian Fellowship Church in Southeast Washington. “There is very little spirituality in their lives, so we try to build on the principles of Jesus.”

The two-story building features a workout room with weight machines, a computer lab and, perhaps the biggest draw of all, a recording studio where House regulars have produced a CD of original songs and music. In addition,

a period when most teenagers are likely to get into mischief or worse. "There are more kids losing their virginity then than at any other time of the day," Fitzhugh notes.

The students get photo ID cards when registered as a House member. About 60 students came regularly during the last school year, Bolden said.

This is not a regimented space. Young people come in and out the front door nonstop. Inside, they mill about, chatting, joking or watching television. Upstairs, the recording studio is crammed with eager rappers holding scraps of paper with freshly-minted lyrics.

Yolanda Armstrong, 18, who graduated from Anacostia in June, finds it difficult to stay away because "you can't miss anything. There's so much going on."

A tall, slim girl dressed in a short skirt, Armstrong said she likes "being able to sit here with people who I know are not going to judge me. You don't have to worry about people talking about you because everyone has a brother and sister relationship.

"I feel like this is my house," she added. "I walk around here with no shoes on. I like the respect that goes on in here for everybody."

A place with rules

The rules posted on the walls, Armstrong explained, were drawn up by members. No smoking, drinking, drugs, weapons, graffiti, racist behavior, fighting or swearing. "Gang-related colors and apparel" also are forbidden.

In a corner of the living room, next to the television, sign-up sheets for upcoming activities are tacked up on the wall. There's night roller-skating, a fishing trip, a bowling outing and biking. Most youths who signed up wrote "No" in the box asking if they owned bikes or skates.

Despite its non-churchy atmosphere, House members are required to attend one of its weekly Bible study sessions. "We mandate that," explained Fitzhugh, "because if we don't have the opportunity to be in front of students and tell them what life is really all about, then we lose our distinctiveness."

Fitzhugh, who has a football player's girth, a booming voice and a talent for rapping, is the jokester, banterer and flatterer of The House, pumping up the students' confidence.

"You think you're cute," he tells one girl. "And you are."

To another teen who is four months' pregnant, he declares, "Your brain is incredible."

She lowers her eyes and replies sweetly, "Why, thank you."

Later, Fitzhugh confides, "I wanted her to know she's special."

Armstrong credited Fitzhugh with being "the first person who got me to



A group of youth and adults in front of The House.

think about stopping smoking. . . . He's always there to talk to." And she appreciates the affection he shows, "because a lot of people don't really get hugged.

Fitzhugh and Bolden use their football history to gain credibility with young people. "It creates a mystique. I'm not ashamed to use it," Fitzhugh said.

But he also reminds students that football is not a reliable source of financial security. "NFL—I tell them that means 'Not For Long!'"

Another reason the three older men relate well to House regulars is that all have experienced some of the same perils afoot in Washington's deprived neighborhoods. Bolden grew up in a single-parent home; one of his brothers was shot dead and another is in prison. Fitzhugh lost his older brother to cocaine and alcohol abuse.

And Musgrove, a Marietta, Ga., native, was doubly afflicted before turning his life around. He made the track team for the 1980 Olympics only to be devastated when the United States boycotted the games that year. He then became ad-

dicted to crack cocaine, ruining his marriage and nearly losing his life.

"It's much easier for us to relate to the students because we've gone through so many of the same things they've gone through," Bolden said.

A place where needs are met

The emotional needs of the young people at The House are felt in small ways. In the first few months it was open, Bolden said, six students asked him to find them a place to live because they weren't getting along with their parents or foster parents.

In the poetry club, one young man read a poem he'd written for his mother. Titled, "Happy Father's Day With Your Mother," it noted how his father "chose to run" but "at least he left me with you."

Fitzhugh remembers how another teen asked him for a ride home even though he lived only blocks away. He realized that the boy feared being mugged by someone coveting his new Eddie Bauer jacket.

One day this summer, three wilting women staggered into the kitchen through the back door with bags of hamburger rolls and potato chips for The House's daily meal. "Our car has no air conditioning!" exclaimed one of the women, taking off her sunglasses.

The women were from McLean Bible in Fairfax County, whose members have donated funds, provided scores of volunteer tutors and supervised the building's renovation. Other funding has come from Faith in the Family, a Christian evangelical foundation in Springfield, and from individuals, churches and local businessmen, including members of the Washington-based American Insurance Association.

"There certainly is an appetite to provide financial support to The House, and one company has already made a commitment to provide \$5,000 annually," said Robert Vagley, president of the association.

Another supporter, whom Bolden declined to identify, recently purchased the boarded-up dwelling next door so The House eventually can expand its operations. "We interpret that as God's finger being all over this [project]," Bolden said.

"If nothing else comes through, we would pray that children would be able to say one day that 'The House was there for us,'" he added. "That indeed is our prayer."

[J]

Left Behind!

The story behind the writing
of this wildly popular series of books.

*It's unusual for a Christian book (other than the Bible) to be a best-seller or to sell more than a million copies. But both are true of the eight novels in the **Left Behind** series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.*

*More than 20 million copies of these novels about the "end times" have been sold. The seventh volume in the series, *The Indwelling*, made its debut at the top of The New York Times best-seller list. In addition, **Left Behind: The Kids Series**, similar novels by LaHaye and Jenkins but written for children, has sold many thousands of copies.*

*Members of the Evangelical Press Association (EPA, of which *THE BROTHERS EVANGELIST* is a member publication) asked co-author Jerry Jenkins questions about his writing career and his work on the **Left Behind** series. Following are his answers to many of those questions.*

EPA: What was the catalyst that spawned the **Left Behind** series?

Jenkins: Since about 1985, Dr. Tim LaHaye had the title and the idea for fictionalizing an account of the Rapture and the Tribulation. He looked for years for a novelist to run with his idea, and our mutual agent introduced us in 1991.

EPA: Did you plan such a long series when you began it, or have you broadened the scope of the project because of the popularity of the books?

Jenkins: No and no. I actually intended to write the entire story in one book. When I was halfway through the writing of that manuscript, I had covered one week of the seven years. Tyndale [Tyndale House Publishers] agreed to make it a trilogy.

When the first book covered two weeks, we decided on six, then seven titles. When I finished book four and was only two-and-a-half years

into the Tribulation, Tyndale asked if I really thought I could squeeze four-and-a-half more years into three books.

I said I could if I changed the pace and made the books more action-oriented than character-driven. Tyndale asked how many titles it would take to maintain the same pace (which they saw as one of the reasons for the success). I said six to get to the halfway point and six more to finish. These books are selling a million copies a month. There's no reason to "milk" it, though of course it appears that way to some and likely prompted this question.

EPA: Are you and Tim LaHaye both active in researching for the stories? Who does what?

Jenkins: He has studied the biblical prophecies for longer than I have been alive. He provides a chart of the chronology of the biblical events and commentaries (his and others') on the passages I will cover in a particular novel.

I get the fun part, writing novels to fit his interpretation of Scripture. Basically, I try to put realistic characters in the way of biblical events and see what happens. I research technology, weaponry, aviation, etc., to make the stories credible, but Dr. LaHaye is the greatest resource I could have to stay on track theologically and biblically.

EPA: How long does it take you and Tim to write a book?

Jenkins: I do all the writing. When I'm cooking I produce about five pages an hour (pages I wouldn't show my worst enemy). The heavy edit/rewrite/polish takes longer

than the first draft, but I'm generally finished in two drafts. I don't submit it until I'm happy with it.

EPA: Is notoriety fun or a pain in the neck?

Jenkins: Both. It's nice to be recognized and appreciated for what you do, but whenever there is a gap between your "image" and who you really are, there is dissonance in your spirit. I feel a responsibility at times to be what people think a novelist should be, but being "on" can be wearying.

I long ago lost any desire to be any more visible than I am now—because I have worked with enough enormously famous people (Billy Graham, Nolan Ryan, Walter Payton, Hank Aaron, *et al.*) to see what a prison that can be. I would never want to find myself unable to

live a normal life, as is the case with the above-mentioned stars. They can't go to dinner or run to the convenience store except in disguise. Being a household name or universally recognized may seem attractive to young people, but I don't covet that an iota.

EPA: How does it feel to see your books being sold in every airport and bookstore in the nation?

Jenkins: Surreal. Any writer has dreamed of that, I assume. It's all happened so fast, it may not have really sunk in yet. The first title in the series is only five years old, released in September of 1995. Books five, six, and seven reached numbers two, two, and one on *The New York Times* list, and those three have all been released within 1999 and 2000.

There are always enough humbling experiences to keep me sane, however. I'll buy a magazine at an airport shop and ask the clerk how "those **Left Behind** books" are doing. Most often they say, "I don't know. Do we sell them here?"

EPA: Please share a favorite story of someone coming to know Christ as a result of the **Left Behind** series.

(continued on next page)



Jerry J. Jenkins

Jenkins: Between Dr. LaHaye and me, we have heard personally from more than 2,000 people who tell us they have become believers through reading these books. I know it sounds like a cliché, but anyone in Christian publishing must understand how that makes sales figures pale.

My favorite story is of an 80-year-old man who said someone in his family gave him *Left Behind*, and because of his aging eyes he had to read it through a magnifying glass. He said he realized at the end of it that if Christ came back, he would be left behind. So he asked one of his children to pray with him, and he received Christ. He said, "It wasn't because of what I read through the glass but because of what I saw through my heart."

EPA: Please share some other stories of Christians being touched by God through the *Left Behind* books.

Jenkins: Here's a letter from a prisoner: "My cousin sent me the first book and I didn't want nothing to do with it. Then I started reading it and I couldn't put it down. . . . Now I'm following in the Lord's footsteps."

We also heard the story of a young woman (about 20), still living at home, who had quit going to church and was—her parents feared—running with the wrong people. Her parents gave her *Left Behind*, but never saw her reading it. Her mother kept putting it where her daughter would notice, and sure enough, one night they noticed the light on in her room until the wee hours.

At dawn she woke them, told them she had read the book and that they didn't have to worry about her anymore.

A touching story is of a Christian young man who was a rascal in high school, though he knew better. He read *Left Behind*, rededicated his life to the Lord, and told his parents he was saving to buy a box of the books to give to the friends he used to hang with. Before he made the purchase he was killed in a car wreck. His parents bought boxes of the book and gave copies to everyone who came to the funeral. They tell us that several of their son's friends came to Christ as a result. They say, "He was an evangelist in death."

Nearly every day we hear of people of all ages coming back to God, back to church, back to the Bible.

EPA: The *Left Behind* books present one approach to eschatology [beliefs about the "end times"]. Is there a danger that evangelicals may not be aware of other views, or may dismiss them without examining them?

Jenkins: The word "eschatology" does not appear in the books. They are novels, and so it would be illogical to present all the possible views. The story can happen in only one way. This happens to be what we believe will happen some day. The Rapture occurs in the first chapter of the first book and the Tribulation follows, so it would be illogical to have terrified, desperate characters sit around discussing other scenarios. We don't insist ours is the only interpretation, but fortunately it makes for the best fiction too.

EPA: What reaction have you received from believers who are not in the premillennial, pretribulation persuasion*?

Jenkins: Surprisingly little. We really expected more. There is a book called *The Left Behind Delusion*, and occasionally we get letters saying that we are heretics, leading people astray, etc. But most letters from those who disagree with the theology say they still love the books and the impact of them.

EPA: How have you responded to critics who take issue with the *Left Behind* books on theological grounds?

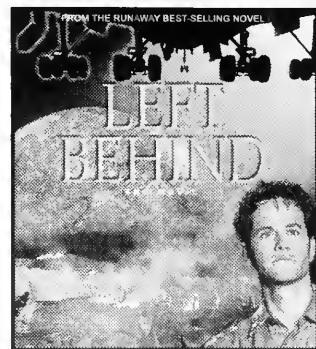
Jenkins: I have no problem with sincere disagreement. I do bristle at the questioning of our motives. Say they were right and we were wrong;

*The view of "end times" that believes that Christ will return and take His church out of the world (the Rapture), that this will be followed by a seven-year period of Tribulation, after which Christ will return again to rule for 1000 years (a Millennium) on earth.

Left Behind: The Movie

Left Behind, the first book in the *Left Behind* series, has also been made into a film. *Left Behind: The Movie* is the most ambitious Christian film in history. Cloud Ten, which produced the movie, budgeted \$17.4 million for production, distribution, and marketing, an unprecedented amount for a Christian film.

Left Behind: The Movie, went on sale on video and DVD in stores on October 31. It is scheduled for release in theaters on February 2, 2001.



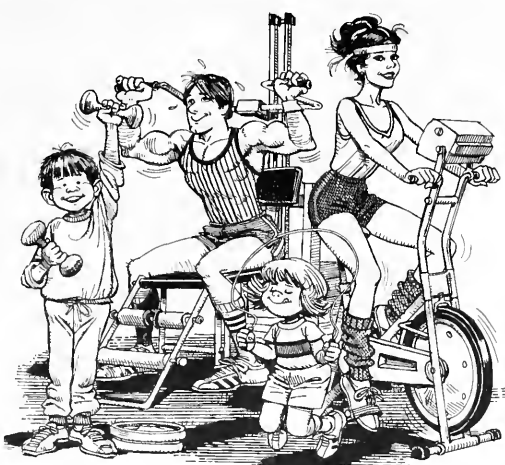
what possible reason would we have for intentionally misleading people?

To those with sincere disagreements and questions, I try to engage them and explain our position, asking that they pray for us even if we never agree. To those who ascribe evil motives to us, I confess I have wasted time asking them how they can question people's characters just because they disagree with them. I understand how some can take issue with Dr. LaHaye's interpretations, but I don't tolerate the attacking of the character of a man who has devoted his entire life to evangelism and the building up of the church.

Fortunately, the vast majority of our mail is positive and encouraging, and even much of the response from opponents is fair and cordial.

EPA: We've heard that the entire series of *Left Behind* books will ultimately consist of 12 books. How far along on that project are you and Tim LaHaye, and when do you anticipate publishing the final book in the series?

Jenkins: Book eight (*The Mark*) is on the press now and will release November 14 (with 2.5 million pre-sold at this writing). My deadline for book nine (working title *Operation Eagle*) is April 2001 with an October release, with each succeeding title due approximately a year apart. Book 12 (*Glorious Appearing*) is scheduled to release the day before Easter 2004. [J]



Getting into SHAPE for our future

By Dan Lawson

AS THE BRETHREN CHURCH moves into the future that God is laying out before us, I believe that we need to get into SHAPE. I believe that The Brethren Church is in a position very similar to that of the Israelites as they stood at the edge of the Promised Land. God has promised us a glorious future, one very different from what we are accustomed to. He has laid it out before us. It is for us to choose whether we will enter this future boldly and conquer it for His glory, or whether we will wander in the wilderness of fear and uncertainty.

In order for us to become what God has planned for us to be, I believe that we, The Brethren Church, need to give attention to the following areas:

Spirituality

Heart

Attitudes

Possibilities

Expectations

Spirituality

Spirituality is the foundation of our walk with God. Spirituality is an ongoing process that continually draws us closer to God and reveals to us His love. Each of us must have individual spirituality that ushers us daily into the presence of God. But it is also necessary for us as a denomination to develop a corporate spirituality that will usher our churches into

a newer, deeper, more abiding relationship with Him. We should desire a relationship with God with the same intensity as we desire our next breath.

Heart

The **Heart** is the seat of our emotions. Our emotions are with us during the happy times and the sad times of life. The depth of our emotions demonstrate our intensity and our passion. If we are to demonstrate a sincere heart as servants of the Most High God, our hearts should break over the things that break God's heart. We should grieve over the things that grieve God. We should weep over the things that God weeps

over and rejoice over the things that gladden the heart of God.

Jesus demonstrated the heart of God to us with great love when He died on the cross. Are we willing to demonstrate that same degree of love to the world around us? Do we share the heart of God so much that we grieve over the lost souls of this world? Do we feel the joy that God feels when a soul is brought into God's Kingdom? Are we a people who are willing to do anything short of sin to save a soul for the Kingdom of God? The Brethren Church should be the active, living, physical expression of the heart of God in the world today.

Attitudes

No matter how hard we try to hide them, our **Attitudes** will always give us away. If we have a bad attitude, it shows. If we have a good attitude, it shows. I fear that some Brethren have developed a bad attitude about the future of The Brethren Church. I fear that still others have allowed themselves to fall into an attitude of apathy and complacency. If we are to move boldly into the future God has in store for us, we must have positive attitudes of enthusiasm and excitement. We must demonstrate an attitude of gratitude to God, and we must show attitudes of love and acceptance to one another. We should never allow our attitudes to affect how we live, but rather

how we live should effect our attitudes of sincerity and kindness. Our attitudes will be our key to success.

Possibilities

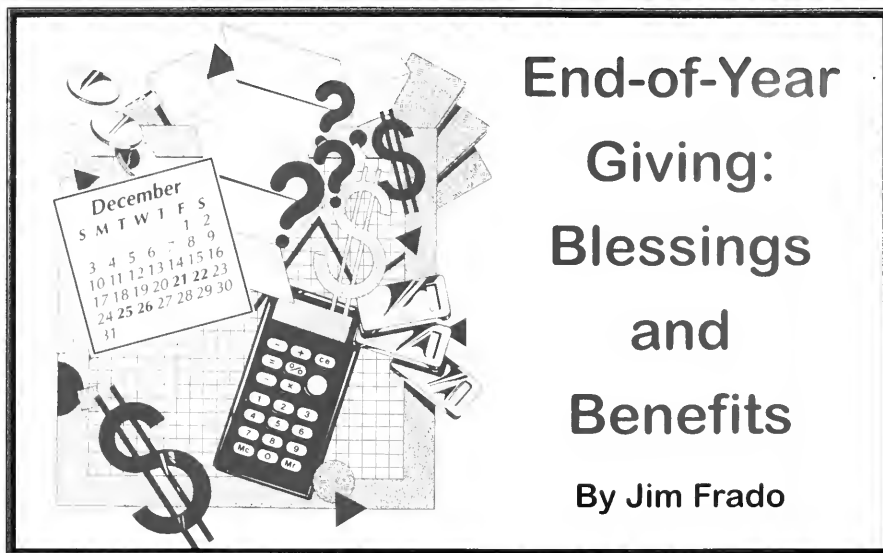
The Possibilities that God has in store for us are endless, and we dare not ignore them. We have the possibilities that technology provides us, the possibilities of new methods and insights, the possibilities of well-trained pastors and, of course, the possibilities of God's miraculous intervention. We can, indeed, do all things through Christ. When our Spirituality, Heart, and Attitudes are right, the possibilities for success will be as countless as the stars in the heavens. We will no longer be faced with decisions only between good and bad or right and wrong. Instead, these divine possibilities will bring us decisions between better and best. We will be faced with possibilities for new churches around the world, with possibilities for larger, more successful churches, and with possibilities for new ministries in places and ways that we could never have dreamed of. We should eagerly embrace the possibilities of God.

Expectations

When we accomplish all of the above, our **Expectations** should be high. I believe we have not because we expect not. If we believe that God is all-powerful and that He desires us to succeed in building up His Kingdom, then why don't we expect Him to do great things through us? Our churches should expect to win souls to Christ; we should expect to plant more churches; we should expect to have adequate finances to support the ministries of the church; and we should expect to do great things. If we expect great things, we will receive great things. But if we expect to fail, we will most definitely fail. We should expect no less than what God expects. Let's raise the standard of our positive expectations!

Let's all join together to do everything in our power and more to get The Brethren Church into SHAPE for the future. The world today is changing at such a fast pace that we will never keep up unless we run with endurance the race marked out before us. Running this race requires that we get into SHAPE. [✞]

Dr. Lawson is Director of Congregational Ministries for The Brethren Church. The ideas in this article were presented to and discussed by members of the Congregational Ministries Council at their meeting in October.



End-of-Year Giving: Blessings and Benefits

By Jim Frado

WELL OVER HALF of all major donations to charitable organizations occur in the final three months of the year. This is a time when most Christians express thanks for the blessings they have received. As we enter into this season of gratitude, we naturally tend to reflect on the needs of others and to seek ways to share our blessings with those in need in our communities and in other parts of the world.

The Bible teaches us that it is our responsibility to show our gratitude to God for His gifts by giving back to Him the "firstfruits" of our blessings (Ex. 23:19). The Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons serve as an excellent reminder that God is the Creator and Giver of all gifts, and that we are here on earth to use those gifts to do His work.

Primary considerations

As we plan our year-end giving, there are two primary considerations that we need to keep in mind.

First and foremost, we need to remember that giving back to God is an expression of our faith and obedience. Clearly there are economic benefits associated with giving, yet the primary reason for contributing to the work of the church should be rooted in our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we have the joy of knowing that by giving our financial resources, we are helping our local churches and Brethren ministries fulfill many aspects of the Great Commission, including outreach, discipleship, and spiritual formation.

Second, the Bible gives us ample instructions on being prudent users of our

financial assets (see for example Prov. 11:25–28, 20:18; Luke 12:33–34). As we come to the end of the year, there are practical reasons for giving that help us to be better stewards of our financial resources. Donors can receive favorable tax treatment for specific gifts to their local churches, to the Missionary and Congregational Ministries of The Brethren Church, and to Ashland Theological Seminary. Such benefits can be gained by employing one or more of the following strategies.

Giving strategies

- **Giving Cash.** If you itemize deductions on your tax return, you may be able to realize a tax savings by giving cash to your church or to a Brethren ministry.
- **Making a gift of stock and securities.** One way to avoid paying high capital-gains tax is to give the gift of appreciated stock or securities. By doing this you not only avoid capital-gains tax, but you also gain a charitable tax deduction for the fair-market value of the stocks or securities as of the day they are transferred. Also, the church or other donee will receive the full value of your contributed stock.
- **Establishing a gift annuity.** Benefits include a safe, fixed annual return for the rest of your life and a charitable tax deduction for the year that the gift annuity is established. Also a portion of the annuity income may be tax-free.
- **Establishing a charitable remainder trust.** Capital-gains taxes can be avoided and a charitable tax deduction

is allowed when the trust is established. The trust can be established in two ways:

A Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust assures one of a fixed return for the rest of one's life.

A Charitable Remainder Unitrust is more variable. The donor receives a fixed percentage of the fair-market value of the principal for the rest of his or her life. As the principal grows, so does the income.

- **Establishing a Life Estate Agreement.** When you deed your personal residence, vacation home, property, or farm to your church or to a denominational ministry, you can receive a charitable tax deduction based on an actuarial value of the remainder. Also, you may elect to live in the deeded property for as long as you choose.
- **Making a gift of your retirement plan.** For tax reasons, giving a retirement plan (IRA, 401-K, TSA, Profit Sharing, SEP, etc.) may be one of the wisest assets to donate to charities because it can avoid the potential of double taxation when passed to a non-spouse.
- **Making a gift of a life insurance policy.** If you have a policy that has outlived its original purpose, consider naming your local church or a specific Brethren ministry as the beneficiary of all or a portion of the policy. Some donors even establish new life insurance policies with the Brethren ministry of their choice as the beneficiary. There are significant tax benefits when you give ownership of your policy to the church, or when you make the church the irrevocable beneficiary.

More information

If you would like to know more about any of these year-end giving strategies and how they can benefit your local church, denominational ministries, and your personal financial situation, please contact me at The Brethren Church National Office. [✉]

(Note: Always consult a tax or legal professional to obtain advice on specific charitable giving.)

Mr. Frado is Director of Stewardship and Development for The Brethren Church. He may be reached by phone at 877-289-1708; by email at jimf@brethrenchurch.org; or by mail at The Brethren Church National Office, 524 College Ave., Ashland, OH 44805.

An Unexpected Visitor to Your Church By Margaret Brouillette



A PARALYTIC was lowered through the roof of a house into a crowded room so that he could meet Jesus (Mark 2:1-12). Have you ever wondered how this man might fare at getting into your house or into your church building today, if Jesus were the featured guest?

Coming through the roof of most modern buildings would be out of the question. But since standing-room-only crowds are rare in today's churches, let's make it easy. Let's just try to get him in the front door on a normal Sunday morning with the sanctuary 80-percent occupied. Now let's see if he meets Jesus.

From the start, let's note that medical and technological advances have gotten our friend off his bed and into a recent-model, shiny, Everest and Jennings wheelchair. Now being on four wheels has definite advantages, but sometimes this kind of independence comes at a high price. For you see, the four friends are nowhere to be found. And so, as is frequently the case, he must rely on a second-rate solution for getting to our church building—the city Para-Transit. The ride in the back of this van would have been tough on those bumpy, dusty roads in Capernaum—no doubt comparable to riding on modern city streets under construction.

So now he sits on the sidewalk in front of our church building—a little late and a little ruffled, but in one piece. The doors are closed, however, and he faces one, four, or as many as twelve steps to enter the building! The usher who discovers him sitting outside is well-meaning but completely befuddled at the sight. Should he (a) ignore the man and hope

he goes away, or (b) call for help.

With a vague recollection of having seen Joni Tada give her testimony at a Billy Graham crusade, he valiantly chooses "b" and signals three other ushers for help. We must note that this kind, though at the moment nervous, gentleman has over-estimated his needs. Two men can usually handle a manual wheel-chair with little difficulty, so the third and fourth ushers will probably only help create a scene. In his favor, however, we will mention that this will be a relatively

safe scene. Had our usher bounded out the door all alone to drag, bump, and haul the wheelchair up six steps by himself, he and the visitor might have ended in a heap on the sidewalk.

More barriers

We could postulate a number of possibilities for the structure of this church building. At one extreme we have such architectural atrocities as multiple stairs, narrow aisles, washrooms in the basement, and poor lighting. At the other extreme are those amazing one-level construction buildings that are accessible in every detail, right down to the grab bars, water fountains, and parking spaces.

But whatever the case, the structure of the building pales to insignificance as the newcomer rolls in, alone, and faces the people—you, me, our children, our friends. Accessibility and integration begin or end right here. Talk to anyone with an obvious disability (if you dare!) and you will soon realize that his or her real handicap is *us*. Why are we so awkward?

In the case of the man in Mark 2, Jesus, with all of His compassion, social concern, and whole-person approach, went directly to the heart of the problem. He said to the disabled man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Notice that Jesus *did not* assume that the man was hearing impaired or mentally challenged just because his legs were paralyzed. He did not address the friends; He spoke directly to the man. And He spoke to him about his spiritual need, just as He would have to any able-bodied (not "normal") person.

To vindicate His right to forgive sins and to silence the scandalized scribes,

Jesus proved his identity by instantly healing the paralyzed man. Now that's convincing. But it's also unlikely to happen to our friend, who is just now recovering from his roller-coaster ride up the front steps of the church.

It's unlikely that any of us will begin a conversation with "Your sins are forgiven; stand up, fold up your wheelchair, and walk." So what are we going to say if today's visitor happens to park his vehicle in the aisle beside our pew? Here are two suggestions: Don't say, "What happened to you?" And do say, "Hello, I'm _____. What's your name?" From that healthy beginning, your conversation will likely keep rolling.

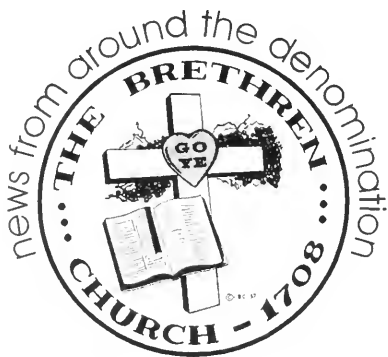
In time we will be able to discern this man's spiritual needs and interests, but for now his physical limitations remain a glaring reality. (Ask the ushers!) Furthermore, if he has suffered a spinal-cord injury, apart from spectacular divine intervention or a medical breakthrough, complete physical healing will await his arrival in glory. So in the meantime, with our feet (and his wheels) still firmly planted on earth, let's try to find some practical way to alleviate the inconveniences his physical limitations cause him.

For starters, offer the man a ride to worship services. Install ramps into the church building. And take a crash course in handling a wheelchair.

To clarify another point, answer these questions. Do your personality and thinking-processes change when you sit down for five minutes? For two hours? For two days? You are still the same person, aren't you? So is the disabled person, whose condition requires him or her to sit permanently.

If we really want this man to see Jesus in our lives and in our congregation; if we really want him to experience forgiveness and take hold of the hope of heaven; then let us do what Jesus did, overlook the disability and talk to the human being. And soon separation becomes integration, despair becomes hope, and we become friends. As a result, our neighbors, like the people in Capernaum, might just be amazed. glorify God, and say, "We've never seen anything like this!" [✠]

Ms. Brouillette is a free-lance writer living in Saint Luc, Quebec, Canada. For five years she coordinated a ministry in which she and a group of disabled Christians traveled to churches where they led seminars and services aimed at integrating the disabled into the church.



Briefly Noted



The **Annual Assembly of The Brethren Church in Argentina**, held Saturday, October 28, was a very blessed occasion, according to Señor José Rivero, president of the Argentine Brethren Church.

The day included a delightful time of worship with a message about the family life of pastors and leaders. A business session followed, during which elections were held for the National Executive Committee. Señor Rivero was re-elected president. The Assembly concluded with a fellowship meal, bringing to an end a time of "brotherhood and love."

A meeting of the National Executive Committee was held on Saturday, November 11, with the Pastors Council, Women's Missionary Society, Youth Committee, and Seminary Board also meeting on that day.

Sunday, October 22, was Pastor Appreciation Day at **The Brethren Church in New Lebanon**, with the church honoring **Pastor Bill and Sharon Walk** during the morning worship service. Moderator Jerry Blosser read a tribute recalling the difficult months in 1997-98 when the congregation went without a pastor, the unanimous decision to call the Walks, and the blessing they have been to the church since their arrival in December 1998.

A plaque was presented to the Walks expressing appreciation for their "unselfish commitment to the Body of Jesus Christ at The Brethren Church [of] New Lebanon." The Walks also received numerous cards and letters of appreciation from individuals in the congregation. [✠]

Saint James Brethren Church breaks ground for 12,000-square-foot multi-purpose facility

St. James, Md. — The St. James Brethren Church broke ground on Sunday, September 10, for an addition to its present facility. The concept of such an addition has been part of church life, planning, and discussion for approximately 12 years.

The new unit, covering approximately 12,000 square feet, will serve as a multi-purpose facility for church and community. It will include classrooms, a high school regulation-size gymnasium, a stage area, several storage areas, and new kitchen and restroom facilities. Extensive landscaping is also planned along with the expansion of the parking lot to about double its present size.

The main room of the new addition will accommodate receptions, athletic events, informal worship services, and community-oriented events. Ministry to senior citizens will be expanded.

The ground-breaking ceremony included members of all age segments of the church, to indicate that this new building will be for all ages. Participants were Scot Drury (children), Jason McMillan (high school youth), Tina McAllister (college/young adults), Kristy Bowers (Director of Christian Education and Family Ministries), Sandy Culler (Administrative Secretary and Leader of Senior Ministries), Lois Hutzell (senior age and in memory of Ralph Hutzell, who served on the Long Range Planning Committee in its early years), Jason Shindle of



St. James Senior Pastor Brian Moore gives encouragement as Scot Drury, representing the children of the congregation, breaks ground for a new addition to the St. James Church building.

Members of the church are engaged in dismantling present structures on the property that will be affected by the expansion. Completion of the addition is expected by mid-summer of next year.

— reported by Pastor Brian Moore

Y'all Come!

Bradenton, Fla. — If Florida is on your agenda for this winter, the Bradenton Brethren Church invites you to put a visit to this church on your Sunday to-do list.

Pastor Buck Garrett and the Bradenton congregation would enjoy having you worship with them and will do their best to make you feel at home. Sunday school begins at 9:30 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m. The church facility is located at 3307 53rd Avenue East in Bradenton (3 miles west of I-75 on Florida Route 70).

Editor's note: If your Florida visit takes you to Sarasota, I'm sure that the Sarasota First Brethren Church (150 North Shade Avenue) or the Sarasota Hispanic Brethren Church (3150 44th Street) would also make you feel welcome.



Rockwell Construction Company, Mercersburg, Pa. (Project Engineer), Lee Butts (Chairman of the Building Committee), and Brian Moore (pastor).

Brethren Bible Church of Louisville celebrates 20-plus years of ministry in the local community

Louisville, Ohio — On Sunday, October 8, the Brethren Bible Church of Louisville celebrated 20-plus years of ministry in the Louisville community — years filled with blessings and challenges. The celebration centered on three themes: appreciation of the past, acknowledgment of the present, and anticipation of the future.

The part of the service celebrating the past included "I Remember When . . .," an opportunity for people to remember the beginnings of the Brethren Bible Church as well as other important events in the life of the congregation.

In September 1978 a core group of people met with Rev. Charles Lowmaster to ask him to assist them in beginning a new church. Arrangements were made to hold worship services in the Louisville Room of Citizens Saving Bank in Louisville. Later, needing more space, the church moved to Fairhope Elementary School. The congregation was officially chartered in a dedication service led by Dr. Charles Munson of Ashland Theological Seminary.

In the spring of 1980, the congregation moved to the Louisville Y.M.C.A. But as attendance grew, the facilities at the Y.M.C.A. became too restrictive. In the fall of 1980 the Lord made available four acres of property at the current location, 9550 Louisville Street. A groundbreaking service for a church facility was held on September 25, 1982.

One of the most-remembered events occurred July 4, 1983, when the partially-framed church structure was blown down by a heavy windstorm. It was totally rebuilt within a few weeks and was soon back on schedule, thanks to many volunteers from the community. The first service in the new building was held March 4, 1984, with dedication on November 4, 1984. Thanks to the Lord's many blessings, the church was debt free in 1986.



Moderator Tom McAlister presents a picture to Pastor Ralph and Bonnie Gibson as an expression of appreciation from the Brethren Bible congregation.

In addition to founding pastor Rev. Charles Lowmaster, others who have served the church as pastor include Rev. David Benshoff, Rev. Jim Ray, Rev. Chris Moellering, Rev. Paul Sluss, and the current pastor, Rev. Ralph Gibson.

In celebrating the present, correspondence was read from denominational and district leaders and from former members who were unable to attend. Pastor Gibson acknowledged the ministry and work of the



current congregation during the morning message, "Keeping the Focus" from Philippians 3:12-14.

The closing of the service included two significant blessings. First, during the last hymn, four people came forward to indicate a desire to join the membership of the church. Second, the congregation expressed appreciation for all of its pastors (October being Pastor Appreciation Month) by surprising and presenting to Pastor Gibson a beautiful picture of Jesus holding a lamb with the inscription, "I am but a tiny Lamb gently held in the arms of the GREAT I AM."

The celebration ended with a wonderful meal prepared by the 20th Anniversary Committee. According to church secretary Kathy McAlister, who reported the event, "The anniversary celebration was a time to praise God for His faithfulness through the years and to remember the many people who have shared their love for the Lord through the church during the past 20-plus years." [†]



Lakeville, Ohio — The Ohio District Family Camp, held September 2-4 at Camp Bethany, had a western theme this year. The 86 people who attended had a great time going on hay rides, doing western folk games, and dressing up in old-time

continued on next page

20th anniversary celebration held Sept. 24 at Smoky Row Brethren Church in Columbus

Columbus, Ohio — The Smoky Row Brethren Church of Columbus celebrated its 20th anniversary on Sunday, September 24. Dr. Dale Stoffer, the church's founding pastor, was the guest speaker for the celebration. He spoke at both the early contemporary service and at the midmorning worship service. Dr. Stoffer's wife Marcia and their two children, Anne and Paul, were also special guests for the day.

The main celebration took place during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. This service included music and scripture passages used at the very first Sunday worship service—held in Dale and Marcia Stoffer's home—and at the 10th anniversary celebration held in 1990. Music for the service was presented by the praise band and the choir.

A slide presentation, put together and given by member Nathan Shireman, depicted the church's growth and good times over the past 20 years. The congregation has had much to celebrate. It now has two worship services; a praise band; an educational wing that is packed full during Sunday school; a very active youth group; an Adventure Bible Club children's program on Sunday evenings; and the start of a new

Spanish worship service on Sunday afternoons. The church is also helping to plant a daughter congregation in Delaware County just started by former Smoky Row associate pastor Rev. Jeff Whiteside, his wife Tracy, and their children, Cara and David.

Following the worship service a catered meal, organized by church member Jeanne Wilson, was enjoyed in the fellowship hall. During the meal a video was shown containing congratulatory messages to the church for its 20

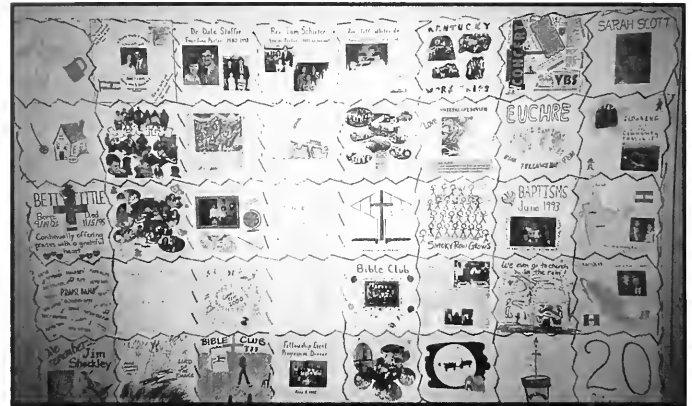
years of ministry. The messages were from Brethren missionaries and leaders whom Smoky Row Pastor Tom Schiefer had video-taped at General Conference in August.

Another way the Smoky Row Brethren commemorated this milestone was by making a "memory quilt." Jeanne Wilson provided poster board squares that members decorated with special memories of church life. The squares were then woven together by the Wednesday morning Koinonia and Coffee Bible-study group. The completed "quilt" covered a big section of wall visible to those entering the sanctuary.

Reporter Gale Shireman wrote, "Everyone present for this Sunday celebration agreed that the day had been very special and really had the family feel that makes Smoky Row special to all who attend here. We appreciate all the work that went into making this day a big success. We also thank former pastors Dale Stoffer and Jeff Whiteside and present pastor Tom Schiefer for all of their dedication to our congregation through its 20 years of service for the Lord. We at Smoky Row Brethren Church look forward to many more exciting years of ministry here in our community and in supporting



our Brethren missionaries around the world." The Smoky Row Church currently has 113 members and averages around 130 for worship. [†]



A "memory quilt" made by members of the congregation for the 20th anniversary celebration of the Smoky Row Brethren Church.

Ohio District Family Camp

(continued from previous page)

western attire to have their pictures taken.

Special speaker for the event was Rev. Randy Saultz, former associate pastor at Park Street Brethren Church in Ashland. He spoke on "Resources and Relationships for Life." Other features included a camp fire on Saturday night led by the summer camp staff and a quiet time Sunday morning, when individual families were encouraged to spend time together in family devotions and prayer.

Head chuck-wagon cook for the weekend was Karen Hetrick, and it's reported that the "vittles" were great. "God truly blessed Family Camp with His spirit of love and friendship," said Tom and Diane McConahay, who headed up the event. [†]

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